

# THE ARGOSY.

JULY 1, 1872.

---

## WITHIN THE MAZE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "EAST LYNNE."

---

### CHAPTER XX.

ONLY ONE FLY AT THE STATION.

THE railway station at Basham seemed to be never free from bustle. Besides pertaining to Basham proper, it was the junction for other places. Various lines crossed each other; empty carriages and trolleys of coal stood near; porters and others were always running about.

Four o'clock on the Tuesday afternoon, and the train momentarily expected in from London. A few people had collected on the platform: waiting for friends who were coming by it, or else intending to go on by it themselves. Amidst them was a young and lovely lady, who attracted some attention. Strangers wondered who she was: one or two knew her for the lady of Foxwood Court, wife of Sir Karl Andinnian.

There had been a flower-show at Basham that day: and Lady Andinnian, as may be remembered, had promised to attend it with the family of General Lloyd, taking luncheon with them first. But when the morning came, she heartily wished she had not made the engagement. Sir Karl had not returned to accompany her. Miss Blake declared that she could not spare the time for it: for it happened to be a Saint's Day, and services prevailed at St. Jerome's. Another check arose: news was brought in from the coachman that one of the horses had been slightly hurt in shoeing, and the carriage could not be used that day. Upon that, Lady Andinnian said she must go by train: for it would never have occurred to her to break her promise.

"I think, Theresa, you might manage to go with me," she said.

Miss Blake, calculating her hours, found she had two or three to spare in the middle of the day, and agreed: provided she might be allowed to leave Mrs. Lloyd's when luncheon was over and not be expected to go to the town-hall. "You will only be alone in returning, for just the few minutes that you are in the train, Lucy," she said. "The Lloyds will see you into it, and your servant can have a fly waiting for you at Foxwood Station." This programme had been carried out: and here was Lucy waiting for the four o'clock train at Basham, surrounded by General Lloyd and part of his family.

It came steaming slowly in. Adieux were interchanged, and Lucy was put into what is called the ladies' carriage. Only one lady was in it besides herself; some one travelling from London. They looked at each other with some curiosity, sitting face to face. It was but natural; both were young, both were beautiful.

"What lovely hair! and what charming blue eyes! and what a bright, delicate complexion!" thought Lucy. "I wonder who she is."

"I have never in all my life seen so sweet a face!" thought the other traveller. "Her eyes are beautiful: and there's such a loving sadness in them! And what a handsome dress!—what style altogether!"

Lucy's dress was a rich silk, pearl grey in colour; her bonnet white; her small parasol was grey, covered with lace, its handle of carved ivory. She looked not unlike a bride. The other wore black silk, a straw bonnet, and black lace veil, thickly studded with spots; which veil she had put back as if for air, just after quitting Basham; and she had with her several small parcels. Why or wherefore neither of them knew, but each felt instinctively attracted by the appearance of the other.

They were nearing Foxwood station—it was but about eight minutes' distance from Basham—when Lucy, in moving her position, happened to throw down a reticule bag which had lain beside her. Both of them stooped to pick it up.

"Oh, I beg your pardon! I ought to have moved it when you got in," said the stranger, placing it amidst her parcels. And Lucy, on her part, apologised for having thrown it down.

It served to break the ice of reserve: and for the next remaining minute or two they talked together. By the stranger beginning to gather together her parcels, Lucy saw she was preparing to get out at Foxwood.

"Are you about to make a stay in this neighbourhood?" she asked.

"For the present."

"It is a very charming spot. We hear the nightingales every evening."

"You are staying in it too, then?"

"Yes. It is my home."

The train came to a standstill and they got out. Foxwood station,

after the manner of some other small rural stations, had its few buildings on one side only: the other was open to the high road, and to the fields beyond. In this road, drawn up close to the station, was a waiting fly, its door already open. The stranger, carrying some of her parcels, went straight up to it, supposing it was there for hire.

"Beg pardon, ma'am," said the driver, "this here fly's engaged."

She seemed vexed, disappointed: and looked up at him. "Are you sure?" she asked. Lucy was standing close by and heard.

"It's brought here, ma'am, for the Lady Andinnian."

"For whom?" she cried, her voice turning to sharpness with its haste; her face, through her veil, changing to a ghastly white.

The driver stared at her: he thought it was all temper. Lucy looked too, unable to understand, and slightly coloured.

"For whom did you say the fly was brought?" the lady repeated.

"For Lady Andinnian of Foxwood Court."

"Oh I—I misunderstood," she said, her voice dropping, her look becoming suddenly timid as a hare's: and in turning away with a sudden movement, she found herself face to face with Lucy. At that same moment, a tall footman, with a powdered head—who had strayed away in search of amusement, and strayed a little too far—came bustling up.

"This is your fly, my lady."

By which the stranger knew that the elegant girl she had travelled with and whose sweet face was then close to her own, was the young Lady Andinnian. Her own white face flushed again.

"I—I beg your pardon," she said. "I did not know you were Sir Karl Andinnian's wife. The fly, I thought, was only there for hire."

Before Lucy could make any answer, she had disappeared from the spot, and was giving some of her parcels to a porter. Lucy followed.

"Can I offer to set you down anywhere? The fly is certainly waiting for me, but—there is plenty of room."

"Oh thank you, no. You are very kind: but—*no!*" I can walk quite well. I am obliged to you all the same."

The refusal was spoken very emphatically; especially the last No. Without turning again, she walked rapidly away from the station, the porter carrying her parcels.

"I wonder who she is?" murmured Lucy aloud, looking back as she was about to enter the fly, her powdered servant standing to bow her in. For she saw that there was no luggage, save those small parcels, and was feeling somewhat puzzled.

"It is Mrs. Grey, my lady: she who lives at the Maze."

Had the footman, Giles, said it was an inhabitant of the world of spirits, Lucy would not have felt more painfully and disagreeably startled. *She!* And she, Lucy, had sat with her in the same carriage and

talked to her on pleasant terms of equality ! She, Mrs. Grey ! Well, Theresa was right : the face would do for an angel's.

"Why, my dear Lady Andinnian, how pale you look ! It's the heat, I suppose."

Lucy, half bewildered, her senses seeming to have gone she knew not whither, found herself shaking hands with Miss Patchett : an elderly and eccentric lady who lived midway between the station and the village of Foxwood. Lucy mechanically asked her if she had come in the train.

"Yes," answered Miss Patchett. "I've been to London to engage a housemaid. And I am tired to death, my dear, and the London streets were like fire. I wish I was at home without having to walk there."

"Let the fly take you."

"It's hardly worth while, my dear: it's not far. And it would be taking you out of your way."

"Not many yards out of it. Step in, Miss Patchett."

The old lady stepped in, Lucy following her ; Giles taking his place by the driver. Miss Patchett was set down at her house, and then the horse's head was turned round in the direction of Foxwood Court. The old lady had talked incessantly ; Lucy had comprehended nothing. St. Jerome's absurd little bell was being swayed and tinkled by Tom Pepp, but Lucy had not given it a second glance, although it was the first time she had had the gratification of seeing and hearing it.

"I could almost have died, rather than it should have happened !" she thought, her face burning now at the recollection of the encounter with Mrs. Grey, so mortifying to every good feeling within her. "How white she turned—how sharply she spoke—when they told her the fly was there for Lady Andinnian ! And to think that I should have offered to set her down ! To think it ! Perhaps those parcels contained things that Karl bought for her in London !"

The fly, bowling on, was nearing the Maze gate. Lucy's fascinated gaze was, in spite of herself, drawn to it. A middle-aged woman servant had opened it and was receiving the parcels from the porter. Mrs. Grey had her purse out, paying him. As she put the coin into his hand, she paused to look at Lady Andinnian. It was not a rude look, but one that seemed full of eager interest. Lucy turned her eyes the other way, and caught a full view of Mr. Smith, the agent. He was stretched out at one of his sitting-room windows, surveying the scene with undisguised curiosity. Lucy sank into the darkest corner of the fly, and flung her hands over her burning face.

"Was any position in the world ever so painful as mine ?" she cried with a rising sob. "How shall I live on, and bear it ?"

The fly clattered in by the lodge gate and drew up at the house. Hewitt appeared at the door, and Giles stood for his mistress to alight.

"Has Sir Karl returned, Hewitt ?" questioned Lucy.



"Not yet, my lady."

"She stood for a moment in thought, then gave orders for the fly to wait, and went indoors. An idea had arisen that if she could get no comfort whispered to her, she should almost go out of her mind. Her aching heart was yearning for it.

"Hewitt, I shall go and see poor Miss Sumnor. I should like to take her a little basket of strawberries and a few of Maclean's best flowers. Will you see to it for me, and put them in the fly?"

She ran up stairs. She put off her gala robes alone, and came down in one of her cool muslins and a straw bonnet as plain as Mrs. Grey's. Hewitt had placed the basket of strawberries—some of the large pineapple beauties that the Court was famous for—in the fly, a sheet of tissue paper upon them, and some lovely hot-house flowers on the paper. Lucy got in; told the footman she should not require his attendance; and was driven away to the vicarage.

"Am I to wait for you, my lady?" asked the driver, as he set her down with her basket of fruit and flowers.

"No, thank you; I shall walk home."

Margaret was lying alone as usual, her face this afternoon a sad one. Lucy presented her little offering; and when the poor lonely invalid saw the tempting, luscious fruit, smelt the sweet perfume of the gorgeous flowers, the tears came into her eyes.

"You have brought all this to brighten me, Lucy. How good you are! I have had something to try me to-day, and was in one of my saddest moods."

The tears and the admission tried Lucy sorely. Just a moment she struggled with herself for composure, and then gave way. Bursting into a flood of grief, she knelt down and hid her wet face on Margaret's bosom.

"Oh Margaret, Margaret, you cannot have as much to try you as I have!" she cried out in her pain. "My life is one long path of sorrow; my heart is breaking. Can't you say a word to comfort me?"

Margaret Sumnor, forgetting as by magic all sense of her own trouble, tried to comfort her. She touched her with her gently caressing hand; she whispered soothing words, as one whispers to a child in pain: and Lucy's sobs exhausted themselves.

"My dear Lucy, before I attempt to say anything, I must ask you a question. Can you tell me the nature of your sorrow?"

But Lucy made no reply.

"I see. It is what you cannot speak of."

"It is what I can never speak of to you or to any one, Margaret. But oh, it is hard to bear."

"It seems so to you, I am sure, whatever it may be. But in the very darkest trial and sorrow there is comfort to be found."

"Not for me," impetuously answered Lucy. "I think God has forgotten me."

"Lucy, hush! You know better. The darkest cloud ever o'er-shadowing the earth, covers a bright sky. *We* see only the cloud, but the brightness is behind it; in time it will surely show itself and the cloud will have rolled away. God is above all. Only put your trust in Him."

Lucy was silent. There are times when the heart is so depressed that it admits not of comfort; when even sympathy cannot touch it. She bent her face in her hands and *thought*. Look out where she would there seemed no refuge for her in the wide world. Her duty and the ills of life laid upon her seemed to be clashing. Margaret had preached to her of patiently bearing, of resignation to heaven's will, of striving to live on, silently hoping, and returning good for evil. But there were moments when the opposite course looked very sweet, and this moment was one. But one thought always held her back when this retaliation, this revenge appeared most tempting—should she not repent of it in the future?

"Lucy, my dear," broke in the invalid's voice, always so plaintive, "I do not pretend to fathom this trouble of yours. It is beyond me. I can only think it must be some difference between you and your husband——."

"And if it were?" interrupted Lucy, recklessly.

"If it were! Why then, I should say to you above all things, *bear*. You do not know, you cannot possess any idea of the bitter life of a woman at real issue with her husband. I know a lady—but she does not live in these parts, and you have never heard of her—who separated from her husband. She and my own mother were at school together, and she married young and, it was thought, happily. After a time she grew jealous of her husband; *she had cause for it*: he was altogether a gay, careless man, fond of show and pleasure. For some years she bore a great deal in silence, the world knowing nothing of things being wrong between them. Papa could tell you more about this time than I: I was but a little child. How he and my mother, the only friends who were in her confidence, urged her to go on bearing with what patience she might, and trusting to God to set wrong things right. For a long while she listened to them; but there came a time when she allowed exasperation to get the better of her; and the world was astonished by hearing that she and her husband had agreed to separate. Ah Lucy! it was then that her life of real anguish set in. Just at first, for a few weeks or so, perhaps months, she was borne up by the excitement of the thing, by the noise it made in the world, by the gratification of taking revenge on her husband—by I know not what. But as the long months and the years went on, and all excitement, I may almost say all interest in life had faded, she then saw what she had

done. She was a solitary woman condemned to an unloved and solitary existence, and she repented her act with the whole force of her bitter and lonely heart. Better, Lucy, that she had exercised patience and trusted in God ; better for her own happiness."

"And what of her now?" cried Lucy, eagerly.

"Nothing. Nothing but what I tell you. She lives away her solitary years, not a day of them passing but she wishes to heaven that one fatal act of hers could be recalled—the severing herself from her husband."

"And he, Margaret?"

"He? For aught I know to the contrary, he has been as happy since as he was before ; perhaps, in his complete freedom, more so. She thought, poor woman, to work out her revenge upon him ; instead of that, it was on herself she worked it out. Men and women are different. A separated man—say a divorced man if you like—can go abroad ; here, there, and everywhere ; and enjoy life without hindrance, and take his pleasure at will : but a woman, if she be a right-minded woman, must stay in her home-shell, and eat her heart away."

Lucy Andinnian sighed. It was no doubt all too true.

"I have related this for your benefit, Lucy. My dear little friend, at all costs, *stay with your husband.*"

"I should never think of leaving him for good as that other poor woman did," sobbed Lucy. "I should be dead of grief in a year."

"True. Whatever your cross may be, my dear—and I cannot doubt that it is a very sharp and heavy one—take it up as bravely as you can, and bear it. No cross, no crown."

Some of the school children came in for a lesson in fine work—stitching and gathering—and Lady Andinnian took her departure. She had not gained much comfort ; she was just as miserable as it was possible to be.

The church bell was going for the five o'clock evening service. Since the advent of St. Jerome's Mr. Sumnor had opened his church again for daily service, morning and evening. This, however, was a Saint's day. A feeling came over poor Lucy that she should like to sob out her heart in prayer to God, and she slipped in. Not going down the aisle to their own conspicuous pew, but into an old-fashioned square, obscure thing near the door, that was filled on Sundays with the poor, and hidden behind a pillar. There, unseen, unsuspected, she knelt on the floor, and lifted up her heart on high, sobbing silent sobs of agony, bitter tears raining from her eyes ; asking God to hear and help her ; to help her to bear.

She sat out the service and grew composed enough to join in it. The pillar hid her from the clergyman's view ; nobody noticed that she was there. So far as she could see, there were not above half-a-dozen people in the church. In going out, Mr. Sumnor and Mr. Moore's sister, Aunt Diana, come up to join her.

"I did not know you were in church, Lady Andinnian," said the clergyman.

"The bell was going when I left your house: I had been to see Margaret: so I stepped in," she replied. "But what a very small congregation!"

"People don't care to attend on week-days, and that's the truth," put in Miss Moore—a middle-aged, stout lady, with her brown hair cut short and a huge flapping hat on. "And the young folks, they are all off to that blessed St. Jerome's. My nieces are gone there; I know it; and so are your two daughters, Mr. Sumnor. More shame for them!"

"Ay," sighed Mr. Sumnor, whose hair and face were alike grey, and his look as sad as his tone. "Their running to St. Jerome's as they do is nothing less, in my eyes, than a scandal. I don't know what is to be the end of it all."

"End of it all," echoed Aunt Diana, in her strong-minded voice. "Why, the end will be folly, or perhaps worse—Rome, or a convent, or something of that kind. I truly believe, Mr. Sumnor, that heaven above was never so mocked before since the world began, as it is now by this semblance of zeal in boys and girls for religious services and worship. The true worship of a Christian, awakened to his state of sin and to the need he has of God's forgiveness and care, of Christ's love, is to be revered—but this is totally different from that business at St. Jerome's. *That's* hollow at the core; born of young men's and young girls' vanity. Does all this flocking thither come of religion, think you? Not it."

"Indeed no," said Mr. Sumnor.

"And therefore I say it is a mockery of true religion, and must be a sin in the sight of heaven. They run after Mr. Cattacomb: nothing else. I went to St. Jerome's myself this morning; not to say my prayers; just to watch my nieces and see what was going on. They had all sorts of ceremonies and foolish folly: three of the girls had been there beforehand, confessing to the Reverend Guy: and there he was then, performing the service and turning up the tails of his eyes."

"Oh Miss Diana," involuntarily exclaimed Lucy, hardly knowing whether to laugh or reprove.

"It is true, Lady Andinnian. Why does he go through his service with all that affectation? Of course the girls like it: but they are little fools, all of them; they'd think anything right that was done by him. I fancy the young man has some good in him; I acknowledge it; but he is eaten up with vanity, and lives in the incense offered by these girls. Ah well, it's to be hoped they will all, priest and children, come to their senses sometime."

She turned into her home, after wishing them good-bye. Lucy stayed to shake hands with the clergyman.

"Miss Diana is given to expressing herself strongly, but she is right

in the main," he said. "St. Jerome's is giving me a great deal of trouble and sorrow just now, in more ways than one. But we have all something to bear," he added after a pause. "All. Sometimes I think that the more painful it is, the more God is caring for us. Fare you well, my dear young lady. Give my kind regards to Sir Karl."

Lucy walked homewards, a feeling of peace insensibly diffusing itself over her afflicted soul. The clergyman's words had touched her.

Verses of Holy Writ and thoughts connected with them kept rising in her mind like messages of consolation. In her misery, she felt how very weak and weary she was; that there was nothing for her but to resign herself to heaven's protecting hand, as a helpless child. The cry for it broke out involuntarily from her lips.

"Lord, I am oppressed. Undertake for me!"

## CHAPTER XXI.

### HARD TO BEAR.

DINNER was waiting when Lady Andinnian entered, and the first person she saw was her husband. He met her in the hall with outstretched hand.

"Did you think I was lost, Lucy?"

She suffered her hand to touch his; for Hewitt and the tall footman, Giles, were standing in the hall, looking on. Sir Karl saw how red her eyes were.

"I meant to have returned by an earlier train; but as I had the day before me I took the opportunity of seeing after a few things I wished to purchase—and the time slipped on," said Karl. "How have you been, Lucy?"

"Oh, quite well, thank you."

"Whom do you think I travelled down with, Lucy. My old friend, Lamprey. He has some business at Basham; so I have brought him home to dinner. Make haste," he added, as she turned to the staircase: "I think it must be ready."

"I will be down directly," she answered.

Aglæ was waiting; and in five minutes Lucy came down again, dressed. Captain Lamprey was introduced to her—for it happened that they had not been personally acquainted when at Winchester—and gave her his arm into the dining-room. Miss Blake fell to Karl.

But in Lucy's heart-sickness, she could scarcely be cheerful. Her tell-tale eyes were heavy; there arose ever and anon one of those rising sobs of the breath that speak most unmistakably of hidden grief: and Captain Lamprey felt somewhat disappointed in Lady Andinnian. He remembered how beautiful Lucy Cleeve used to be: he had heard of the renewed gaiety of heart her marriage with Karl brought her: but he saw only a sad woman, who was evidently not too

happy, and whose beauty was marred by sadness and paleness. Karl was more cheerful than usual ; and Miss Blake seemed not to tire of inquiring after Winchester and its people. But in the midst of all his observations, Captain Lamprey never suspected that there was anything but perfect cordiality between Sir Karl and his wife. And the dinner came to an end.

After coffee, Captain Lamprey set off to walk to Basham. Karl went out with him, to put him in the right road and accompany him part of it. Miss Blake had gone to Vespers. Lucy was alone.

It seemed to her dull everywhere ; especially dull indoors, and she stepped out to the lawn : turning back almost immediately to get a shawl for her shoulders, in obedience to an injunction of her husband's. On the Sunday evening when he found her sitting out of doors without one, he had fetched one at once, and begged her not to be imprudent or to forget her ague-fever of the previous year. She remembered this now and went back for the shawl. Some wives, living in estrangement from their husbands, might have studiously set his commands at naught, and have risked ague, or what not, rather than obey them. Not so Lucy Andinnian. She was meek and gentle by nature. Moreover, in spite of the ill-feeling he had caused to rise up between them, in spite of her sense of wrong and insult, she loved him in her heart, and could not help it, as truly as ever. Visions would steal over her in unguarded moments, of the present trouble being hushed to rest ; of all that was amiss being done away with, and she and he reconciled and at peace again. Unhappily for the demands of pride, of self-assertion, Lucy was by no means one of your high-spirited and strong-minded heroines, who rashly overlook all interests to indulge in reprisals and revenge.

She folded the shawl about her—one of substantial white silk crape—as carefully as Karl could have folded it ; and she stayed, she knew not how long, in the open air. Pacing the lawn ; sitting amidst the flowers ; standing under the shade of the trees ; always in deep thought. The nightingale sang, and the tears gathered in her eyes as she listened to the melodious strain. “What a sweet place this would be to live in,” thought Lucy, “if only we could but have peace with it !”

But the nightingale's song and the oppressive thoughts, together with the falling dusk, brought back all her low spirits again. “There will never be any more happiness for me in this world, never never,” she sighed, and the tears were dropping as she went up to her own room.

By and by Sir Karl returned. Not seeing his wife down stairs, he went up and knocked at the door of her little sitting-room. He had not had an opportunity of speaking a private word to her since his return. There came no answer and he entered. The room was empty : but as he stood for a moment in the deep silence of twilight, the sound of sobs in Lucy's bed-chamber smote his ear. He knocked at it.

“Lucy !”



She had indeed once more given way to all the abandonment of grief. Which was very foolish : but perhaps its indulgence brought a kind of relief, and in truth her spirit was very sore. The knock startled her : but she had not heard the call.

"Who's there?" she asked, stepping to the door and stifling her sobs as she best could.

"I want to speak to you, Lucy."

She dried her eyes, and unlocked the door, and made believe to be calmly indifferent, as she stepped into the sitting-room.

"I beg your pardon, Sir Karl. I was busy and did not hear you."

"You are looking very ill, Lucy," he said with grieved concern. "I thought so when I first saw you this afternoon. Then, as now, your eyes were red with weeping."

She strove for calmness ; she prayed for it. Her determination had been taken to bury in haughty silence all she had learnt of the London journey, its despicable deceit, and insult to her. She *could not* have spoken of it ; no, not even to reproach him and to bring his shame home to him : it would have inflicted too much humiliation on her sensitive spirit.

"I have had rather a tiring day," she answered, leaning sideways against the open window. "There was the elaborate luncheon with General and Mrs. Lloyd, and the flower-show afterwards. The weather was very warm and oppressive."

"That may account for your being tired and not looking well : but not for the weeping, Lucy. As I stood here waiting for you to answer my knock, I heard your sobs."

"Yes," she said, rather faintly, feeling how useless it would be to deny that there had been some weeping. "I get a little low-spirited sometimes in the evening."

"But why? wherefore?"

"Is life so pleasant with us just now that I can always be gay, think you?" she retorted after a pause, and her voice took a tone of resentment.

"But the unpleasantness is of your making ; not mine. You *know* it, Lucy."

"Then—then it is right that I should be the one to suffer," was her impatient answer—for his words were trying her almost beyond endurance. "Let it go so : I do not wish to speak of it further."

Karl was standing at the opposite corner of the window, facing her, his arms folded. On his part he was beginning to be a little out of patience too, with what he deemed her unreasonable caprice. For a few moments there was silence.

"What I want to tell you is this, Lucy. My visit to London was connected with that wish which you seem to have so much at heart—though I cannot exactly understand why—"

"I have no wish at heart," she resentfully interrupted.

"Nay, but hear me. The wish you expressed to me I think you must have at heart, since on its fulfilment you say depends our reconciliation. I speak of the removal of—of the tenants of the Maze," he added, half breaking down, in his sensitive hesitation. "Since my conversation with you on Saturday, during which, if you remember, this stipulation of yours was made, there occurred by what I should call a singular chance, only that I do not believe anything is chance that affects our vital interests in this life—there occurred to me a slight circumstance by which I thought I saw a possibility of carrying out your wish——"

"You said then that it was your wish also," again interrupted Lucy. "Or affected to say it."

"Your wish for it cannot be as hearty as mine," he impulsively answered. "I pray for it night and day."

And Lucy could not well mistake the emotional earnestness. She believed him there.

"Well, I thought I saw a chance of it," he resumed, "and I went to get some information, that I fancied might help me, from Plunkett and Plunkett——"

"Is it fitting that you should give these details to me?" she haughtily interposed.

"I wish you to understand that I am doing my best. Plunkett and Plunkett could not give me the information: but they directed me to some people where I might obtain it. To enable me to see one of these people I had to stay in town all night; and that was the reason of my not getting home."

Lucy had taken a spray of jessamine from her waist-band, and stood pulling it to pieces, as she listened with an air of indifference.

"I do not really know more than I did before I went to town, as to whether or no the Maze can be left empty," he went on. "But I have a good hope of it. I think I may be able to accomplish it, though perhaps not quite immediately. It may take time."

"As you please, of course," answered Lucy coldly. "It is nothing to me."

Karl Andinnian had one of the sweetest tempers in the world, and circumstances had taught him patience and endurance. But he felt grieved to his very heart at her cutting indifference, and for once his spirit rebelled against it.

"Lucy, how dare you treat me so? What have I done to deserve it from you? You must know and see what a life of tempest and apprehension mine is. There are moments when I feel that I could welcome death rather than continue to live it."

She was not ungenerous. And, as he so spoke, it struck her that, whatever her wrongs, she had been petty and ungracious to him now.

And perhaps—heaven knew—he was really striving to rid himself of Mrs. Grey as earnestly as she could wish it. Her countenance softened.

"I am as a man tied down in a net from which there is no extrication," he resumed with increased emotion. "My days are so full of care that I envy the poor labourers at work by the road-side, and wish I was one of them—anything in the world, good or bad, but what that world calls me—Sir Karl Andinnian. And my wife, whom I have loved with my heart's best love, and whom I might have fondly hoped would pity my strait and comfort me—she turns against me. God forgive you for your harshness, Lucy."

The reproaches wrung her heart terribly. In the moment's repentance, she believed she had judged him more hardly than he deserved. Her tone was gentle, her eyes had tears in them.

"I have to bear on my side too, Karl. You forget that."

No, he did not forget it. But the temporary anger was pre-eminent just then. A hot retort was on his lips; when the sight of her face, sad with its utter sorrow, struck on every generous chord he possessed, and changed his mood to pity. He crossed over and took her unresisting hands in his.

"Forgive my words, Lucy: you tried me very much. We have both something to forgive each other."

She could not speak; sobs were rising in her throat. Karl bent forward and kissed her passionately.

"Need we make life worse for one another than it is?" he asked.

"I cannot help it," she sobbed. "Don't blame me, for I cannot help it."

"Suppose I take the matter into my own hands, Lucy, and say you shall help it."

"You will not do that," she said, the implied threat restoring her coldness and calmness, though her face turned as pale as the blossoms of the jessamine. "Things are bad enough as they are, but that would make them worse. I should leave your home for good and all—and should have to say why I do so."

She knew how to subdue him. This exposure, if she carried it out, might cost his brother's safety. Karl dropped her hands, and went back to his post at the opposite side of the window.

"I have not said quite all I wish to say," he began, in a voice from which emotion had passed. "As I had the day in London before me, I thought I would look after a pony-chaise for you, Lucy, and I found a beauty. It will be home in a day or two."

"But you have not bought it?"

"Yes, I have."

"Oh, I'm sorry! I did not want one. But it was very kind of you to think of me, Karl," she added in her gratitude.

"And there's a pretty pony to match: a small, quiet, gentle creature.

I hope you will like him. I cannot have you running about the place on foot, making yourself ill with the heat."

"Thank you; thank you. But I never drove in my life. I fear I should be a coward."

"I will drive you until you get used to him. That is, if you will permit me. Lucy, believe me, amidst all my care and trouble, your happiness lies next my heart."

On his way to leave the room, he stopped and shook hands with her. Theresa Blake, walking on the lawn beneath, had seen them conversing together at the window. She thought a taste of Jane Shore's pillory might not have been amiss for bringing Lady Andinnian to her senses.

Presently Lucy went down and had tea with Theresa, presiding herself at the cups and saucers by moonlight—for there was little light of day left. Sir Karl did not appear. He was in his room on the other side the house, holding some colloquy with Hewitt.

"I am going to have a pony-chaise, Theresa."

"Oh, indeed," returned Miss Blake, who seemed in rather a crusty humour. "I thought I heard you say you that you did not require one."

"Perhaps I may be glad of it, for all that. At any rate, Sir Karl has bought it, pony, and chaise, and all; and they will be down this week."

Miss Blake's face was a scornful one just then, in her condemnation of wrong-doing. "He bribes her into blindness," was the thought that ran through her mind.

"Why are your eyes so red and heavy, Lucy? They were so at dinner."

"My eyes red!" artfully responded Lucy. "Are they? well, I have had rather a tiring day, Theresa; and it has been so very hot, you know. You ought to have waited for the flower-show. It was one of the best I ever saw."

"Yes, I should have liked it."

"I took home poor Miss Patchett in my fly, from the station," went on Lucy, who seemed to be running from one topic to another, perhaps to divert attention from herself. "She had been to London to engage a servant, and looked ready to drop with the heat. Did you ever know it so hot before, Theresa?"

"I think not. Not for a continuancy. Is Sir Karl going to take any tea? There's nothing else so refreshing these sultry evenings."

"He says tea only makes him hotter," returned Lucy with a smile. "Ring the bell, please, Theresa: you are nearer to it than I am."

Giles appeared, in answer, and was sent by Lucy to inquire whether his master would take tea, or not. The message brought forth Karl. The moon was shining right on the table.

"I'll drink a cup of tea if you will put in plenty of milk to cool it," said he. "How romantic you look here, sitting in the moonlight! Thank you, Lucy."

"We are glad to do without lights so long as we can in this weather," observed Miss Blake.

He drank the tea standing, and went back again. Lucy sent the tray away, and presently ordered the room to be lighted. She then ensconced herself in an easy chair with one of the romances Karl had brought her on the Saturday: and Miss Blake strolled out of doors.

At first Lucy held the book upside-down. Then she read a page three times over, and could not comprehend it. Ah, it was of no use, this playing at light-hearted ease. She might keep up the farce tolerably well before people, but when alone with herself and her misery, it was a senseless mockery.

Leaving the book behind her, she went wandering about from room to room. The windows of all were put open, to catch what little air there might be. As she stood in one of the unlighted rooms, Sir Karl passed along the terrace. She drew back lest he should see her, and heard him go into the lighted drawing-room and call her.

"Lucy!"

Not a word would she answer. She just stood back against the wall in the dark beyond the curtain, and kept still. He went out again, and began pacing the opposite path in the shade cast by the overhanging trees. Lucy watched him. Suddenly he plunged in amidst the trees, and she heard one of the private gates open and close.

"He is gone *there*," she said, the pulses of her heart quickening, and her face taking a ghastly tinge in the moonlight.

Miss Blake, who had been also lingering in the garden, in some of its hidden nooks and corners, her thoughts busy with Guy Cattacomb and with certain improvements that reverend man contemplated at St. Jerome's, had also seen Sir Karl, and watched his stealthy exit. She immediately glided to another of the small private gates of egress, and cautiously opened it.

"Yes, I thought so: he is off to the Maze," she mentally cried, as she saw Sir Karl, who had crossed the road, walking towards that secluded spot, and keeping close against the opposite hedge. The moonlight was flung pretty broadly upon the road to-night, but the dark hedge served to screen him in a degree. Miss Blake's eyes were keen by moonlight or by daylight. She watched him pass under the trees at the entrance; she watched him open the gate, and enter. And Miss Blake, religious woman that she was, wondered that the skies did not drop down upon such a monster in human shape; she wondered that the same pure air from heaven could be permitted to be breathed by him and by that earthly saint, The Reverend Guy.

Some few of us, my readers, are judging others in exactly the same

mistaken manner now : and have no more suspicion that we are wrong and they right than Miss Theresa Blake had.

Karl locked the gate safely, and wound himself through the maze of trees to the other end. Part of the grass-plot was steeped in light, and he saw Mrs. Grey walking there. He crossed it to accost her.

"Did you get back yesterday, Rose," he inquired, after shaking hands.

"No, not until this afternoon." Rennet kept me. I saw him when I drove there yesterday : but he was then preparing to go out of town for the rest of the day on business, and it was impossible for him to do what was wanted before this morning. So I had to wait in town.

"I wonder we did not chance to travel down together, then!" observed Karl. "I did not return until this afternoon. Would you like to take my arm, Rose, while you walk."

"Thank you," she answered, and took it. She had on the high black dress she had worn to London, and her golden hair gleamed with all its beauty in the moonlight. Karl remarked that she leaned upon him somewhat heavily.

"You are tired, Rose!"

"I felt very tired when I got home. But Ann Hopley preaches to me so much about the necessity of taking exercise that I thought I would walk about here for half-an-hour. I have had scarcely any walking to-day : I was so fatigued with the journey and shopping yesterday that I had to keep still this morning."

"Where's Adam?"

"In-doors. He is complaining of that sensation of pain again. I don't like it at all, Karl."

"And while he is lying concealed here he cannot have medical advice. At least, I don't see how it would be possible."

"It would not be possible," said Rose, decisively. "Oh, but I forgot—I have to tell you something, Karl. Whom do you think I travelled with from Basham to Foxwood?"

"I don't know."

"Your wife."

"My wife!"

"It is true. I was in the ladies' carriage alone all the way from London. At Basham a young and elegant lady in pearl-grey silk and white bonnet, with the daintiest parasol I ever saw, was put in. An old gentleman—she called him 'General'—and some ladies were with her on the platform. We were alone in the carriage, she and I ; and I think we looked at each other a good deal. What she thought of me I don't know ; but I thought that she had one of the sweetest and gentlest faces my eyes ever rested on. She had a sweet voice, too, for we spoke a little just as we got to Foxwood."

"But did you know her?—did she know you?" interrupted Karl.



"No, no. I should have had no idea who she was, but that there arose some question about the one fly waiting there, and some one said it had been brought for Lady Andinnian. Karl, if ever I felt startled in my life, it was then. 'Lady Andinnian!' I took it at the moment to mean me, and I felt my face turn white at the danger. Almost at once I recognized my mistake, and saw how it was—that *she* was the Lady Andinnian meant, Sir Karl's wife. I think I said something to her, but I was so confused I hardly know. I only have wondered since that I did not guess who she was at first, from her attire and her beauty."

"Lucy did not tell me of this."

"Oh dear no, she would not be likely to recal it, or to know me from any other stranger one may meet in travelling. Adam says you love her to excess: I am sure, Karl, I don't wonder at it."

He made no answer. Yes, he loved his wife with a wondrous love: but just now she was trying it sharply.

"And about the matter you went up upon?" resumed Mrs. Grey. "Did you succeed in learning anything about Philip Salter?"

"Not much. I joined you on the grass here to tell you what I did learn, before going in to Adam. Salter has never been retaken: and the police have an idea that he is still in concealment in England. There's a reward of five hundred pounds out against him."

"Why do they think he is in England?" asked Rose, quickly.

"I don't know. They would not tell me."

"You communicated with the police, then, Karl. You were not afraid?"

"Not with the police as a body, but with one of their private detectives, a Mr. Burtenshaw. Plunkett and Plunkett gave me a note to him. It was he who said he believed Salter to be still in the country: but the reason for believing it he would not give me."

"And did you get him described?"

"Yes, by the very man who let him escape: Burtenshaw sent for him. In nearly every particular his description tallies with Smith."

"Oh, Karl! he is certainly Salter."

"Does Smith wear his own hair?"

"Yes. At least," she added, less decisively, "if it were false I think I should not have failed to notice it. It is very dark: his whiskers are nearly black and his hair is only a shade lighter."

"Just so. But—I should say Smith was forty."

"About that."

"Well, Salter, they say, would be now only five-and-thirty. I don't attach much importance to the disparity," added Karl: "Salter's trouble may have prematurely aged him."

"What shall you do in it?" she asked. "It seems to me that if we could get Smith removed so as to leave Adam, in that sense, free, the half of our dreadful trouble would be over."

"I don't know what I shall do," replied Karl. "It will not do to stir an inch, as to the bringing it home to Smith, unless I am sure and certain. At present, Rose, it seems to be for me only another care added to the rest."

"Karlo, old fellow, is that you?" interrupted a voice from the window over the porch. "What on earth do you stay chattering to the wife for? I want you."

Karl looked up, nodded to his brother, and went in. Adam was in his customary evening attire, and just as gay as usual. He waited for Karl at the head of the stairs and they went together into the sitting-room that was always used at night. This sitting-room had a second door; one in the paneling, not visible to a casual observer. It communicated with a passage that nothing else communicated with; the passage communicated with a spiral staircase, and that with nobody knew what or where. Had Adam Andinnian been surprised in his retreat by his enemies, it was by that private door he would have made his escape—or tried to do it.

"Rose says you are not very well, Adam: that you are feeling the pain again," began Karl. "What do you think it is?"

"Goodness knows," returned Adam; "I don't. My opinion is, I must in some way have given my inside a deuce of a wrench. I don't tell Rose that: she'd set on and worry herself."

"I hope it is nothing serious—that it will soon pass off. You see, Adam, the cruel difficulty we should be in, if you were to require medical advice."

"Oh, bother!" cried Adam.

"Why do you say 'bother?'"

"Because it is bother, and nothing else. When did I ever want medical advice? In general health, I'm as strong as a horse."

"When we were young men at home, they used to say I had twice the constitution that you had, Adam, in spite of your strong looks."

"Home fallacy!" said Adam lightly. "It was the father used to say that, I remember. For the most part, the preaching that people make over 'constitution' is worth no more than the breath wasted on it. The proof of a pudding is in the eating: and the proof of a sound constitution lies in a man's good strength. I am stronger than you, Karl."

To argue with Adam Andinnian had been always about as profitable as to tell a ship to sail against the wind. So Karl said no more about strength.

"The chance that such a necessity may arise, Adam, and the difficulty and danger that would attend it——"

"What necessity?" interrupted Adam.

"Of your requiring a medical man. Your wife will want one; but that's different: she is supposed to live here alone, and you will of

course be out of the way. But the other thought does cross my mind anxiously sometimes."

"Karlo, old man, you were always one of the anxious ones. I am content to leave problems alone until they arise. It is the best way."

"Sometimes it may be ; not always. Of course all these thoughts turn round to one point, Adam—the urgent expediency there exists for your quitting the Maze."

"And I am not going to quit it."

"The advance of those people on Saturday night; the studied tramp, as I thought it, of policemen, gave me a fright, Adam. Let us suppose such a thing for a moment—that they were coming after you. No earthly aid could have shielded you."

"But they were not coming after me, you see ; they were but carrying some poor dead man to his home on my estate. The same fear may apply wherever I go."

"No, it could not. It could apply to nowhere as it does to here. In some place abroad, Adam, you would be comparatively secure and safe. I am convinced that this locality is, of all, the most dangerous."

"If I were already at the same place you mention, wherever that may be—an inaccessible island in the icy seas, say—I should undoubtedly be more out of the reach of English constables and warders than I am now : but as matters stand, Karl, I am safer here, because the danger to me would lie in getting away. I shall not attempt to do it."

Karl paused for a few minutes before he resumed. His brother, sitting near the shaded lamp, was turning over the pages of the "Art Journal," a copy of which Mrs. Grey had brought from London.

"How came you to know Smith, Adam?"

"How came I to know Smith," repeated Sir Adam. "To tell you the truth, Karl, Smith saved me. But for his sheltering me in the time you know of, I should not be at liberty now ; probably not in life. Until then, he was a stranger."

"And for saving you he exacts his black mail."

"Little blame to him for it," returned Sir Adam, with a half laugh.

"I believe that the man is keeping you here," continued Karl ; "that you dare not go away unless he lifts his finger."

"Naturally he is anxious for my safety, Karl ; for the sake of his own self-interest."

"Precisely so. He would rather keep you here in danger than suffer you to escape to freedom. Do you know anything of his antecedents?"

"Nothing. For all I can tell, as to who or what the man was before that night he rescued me, he might have dropped from the moon."

"And since then it has been the business of your life to conciliate him, Adam!"

"What would you? The man knows that I am Adam Andinnian :

and, knowing it, he holds a sword over me. Is it worth my while, or not, to try to keep it from falling?"

Karl sighed deeply. He saw all the intricacies of the case; and, what was worse, he saw no outlet from them. If only he could but feel that his brother was passably safe at the Maze, he would have been less uneasy: but a secret instinct, that he surely believed was a prevision, warned him of danger.

"I wish, with my whole heart, Adam, that you had never come here!" broke from him, in his dire perplexity, the reiterated cry.

Sir Adam threw down the "Art Journal," and turned to confront his brother, leaning a little forward in his chair. His face was flushed, his voice took a tone of passion, even his beautiful teeth looked stern.

"Karl, did you ever try to realize to yourself all the horrors of my position at Portland?" he asked. "I, a gentleman, with a gentleman's habits—and a man to whom freedom of will and of limb was as the very essence of life—was condemned for ever to a manacled confinement; to mate with felons; to be pointed at as one of a herd of convict labourers. A felon myself, you will perhaps say; but I do not recognize it. Had I been guilty of aught disgraceful? No. What I did, in shooting that man Scott, I was perfectly justified in doing, after my solemn warning to him. Remember, it was my wife he insulted that evening; not simply, as the world was allowed to believe, my young neighbour, Miss Rose Turner. What should *you* feel if some low reprobate seized your wife, Lucy, before your eyes, and pressed his foul kisses on her innocent face? Your blood would be up, I take it."

"Adam, since I knew she was your wife I have held you justified."

"To go on. Can you realize a *tithe* of what it was for me on Portland Island?"

"From the time you went there until I heard of your death, I never ceased to realize it in my own soul night or day."

"Karl, I believe it. I remember what your sensitively tender nature always used to be. And we did care for each other, old fellow."

"Ay, and *do*."

"Well, compare that life I escaped from with this that I lead now. Here I am, so to say, a free man, at perfect liberty within these small bounds, my wife for my companion, my table at my command, master on my own estate, the revenues of which I divide with you that you may be the baronet to the world and keep up Foxwood. As fate as fallen, Karl, I could not be so happy anywhere as here."

"I know; I know. But it is the risk I fear."

"There must be some risk everywhere."

"Answer me truly—as you would to your own heart, Adam. If by some miracle you could be transported safely to a far-off land, would you not feel more secure there than here?"

"Yes. And for Rose's sake I would go if I could: she is just as

apprehensive here as you. But I can't. When Smith says I must not attempt to get away, he is right. I feel that he is. The man's interest lies in my safety."

"Just so," said Karl. "Smith is the stumbling-block."

"Well, he holds the reins, you see. It is no use trying to fight against his opinion. I can't afford to come to a rupture with him. Good heavens, Karl! fancy his sending me back in irons to Portland! That will never be, however," added Sir Adam more calmly, "for I would not be taken alive. I or my capturers should fall."

He put his hand inside his white waistcoat, and showed the end of a pistol. One he kept close to him night and day, always loaded, always ready.

And so the interview ended in nothing, just as others had ended.

A black cloud, threatening thunder, had come over the summer's night when Karl went out. It did not seem to him half so dark as the trouble at his own heart. He would have given his life freely, to purchase security for his brother.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE MAZE INVADED.

THE previous night's black cloud had culminated in a thunder-storm, and the morning air felt fresh and cool; but the blue sky was clear, the sun as bright as ever.

Lucy came down with sad eyes and a pale face. Her night had been one of mental pain. She was wondering how much longer she could keep up this mask of cheerfulness—which she would especially have to wear that day; and she knew that she could not have done it at all but for the very present help of God. Karl, waiting in the breakfast-room, turned to shake hands with her. But for being alone, he would not have ventured on this eminently suggestive action.

"How are you to-day, Lucy?"

"Oh quite well, thank you. Did you hear the storm?"

"Yes. It has cleared away some of the sultry heat. We shall have a lovely day."

The Lloyds were expected from Basham. When at the flower-show the previous day, Lucy had remarked that some of the hot-house plants were not as fine as those at Foxwood: upon that, the General and one of his daughters had simultaneously expressed a wish to see those at Foxwood. Lucy at once gave the invitation; and it was arranged that they should spend the next day at the Court. She had told her husband of this while Captain Lamprey was present; but it had not been alluded to afterwards. She spoke again now, while she and Karl were waiting breakfast for Miss Blake, who was at Matins at St. Jerome's.

"I could not do less than ask them," she observed. "I hope you are not vexed."



"You did quite right, Lucy," he cheerfully answered. "I shall be glad to see them."

"I don't know how many will come. Perhaps all; except Mrs. Lloyd, who never goes out anywhere. I hope Theresa will give up St. Jerome's for the rest of the day, and stay at home to help me entertain them."

Karl smiled. "To make sure of that you should invite Mr. Cattacomb."

"But you would not like that, would you?"

"No. I was only joking, Lucy. Here she is."

The Lloyds had said they would come early, and Karl strolled out to meet the eleven o'clock train, leaving his wife decorating her drawing-room with flowers. Unhappy though Lucy was, she was proud of her home, and pleased that it should find admiration in the eyes of the world.

As Karl was passing Clematis Cottage, he saw Mr. Smith seated at the open window, leisurely enjoying the freshened air, and smoking a cigar. Karl had been wanting to take a close, observant view of him; and he turned in on the spur of the moment. The asking for something which he really required afforded an excuse. Mr. Smith rose up to receive him graciously, and threw his half-smoked cigar out at the window.

"I think you have the plan of the out-lying lands of the estate, Mr. Smith, where the new cottages are projected? Will you spare it to me in the course of the day? I will send Hewitt for it."

"Certainly, Sir Karl; it is at your service. Won't you take a seat? The bit of a breeze at this open window is quite refreshing."

Karl sat down. Mr. Smith's green glasses lay on the table, and he could enjoy as clear a view of him as he pleased. The agent talked away, all unconscious no doubt that notes were being taken of his face and form.

"It is his own hair," mentally spoke Karl. "'Very dark brown,' they said; 'nearly black.' Just so. At the time of the escape Salter had neither whiskers nor beard nor moustache: now the probability is that he has a full crop of all. Just so, again. Eyebrows: thick and arched, Grimly said: these are not thick; nor, what I should call, arched: perhaps there may be some way of manipulating eyebrows, and these have undergone the process. Eyes brown: yes. Face fresh and pleasant: yes. Voice and manners, free and genial: yes. Age? — there I can't make the two ends meet. I am sure this man's forty. Is it Salter, or is it not? finally summed up Karl. "I don't know. I *think* it is: but I don't know."

"Truefit the farmer spoke to me yesterday, Sir Karl. He was asking whether you and Lady Andinnian viewed this new farce on his grounds with approbation. That's what he called it—farce. Meaning St. Jerome's."



"I suppose he does not like it," observed Karl.

"I fancy he does not really care about it himself, one way or the other, Sir Karl; in fact, he signified as much. But it seems his better-half, Mrs. Truefit, has taken a prejudice against it: calling the ceremonies 'goings-on,' and 'rubbish,' and 'scandal,' and all sorts of things. It is a pity Mr. Cattacomb can't confine himself to tolerable common-sense. The idea of their hanging that bell outside over the door, and pulling it perpetually!"

"Yes," said Karl. "So much nonsense takes all solemnity away."

"They are going to dress Tom Pepp in a white garment now, while he rings it, with a red cross down the back. It's that, I fancy, that has put up Mrs. Truefit. I told the farmer that I believed Sir Karl and Lady Andinnian did not favour the place: at least, that I had never seen them attend it."

"And you never will," returned Karl, as he rose.

There was nothing to stay for; his observations were taken, and he departed, having to walk quickly to be in time at the station. The party came by it; six of them. Captain Lloyd, who was at home on leave; two Miss Lloyds; a married sister and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Panton, at present staying on a visit; and the General.

Karl had expressed pleasure at his wife's invitation; perhaps had felt it; but he could not foresee the unlucky contretemps that the visit was to bring forth. To his unbounded astonishment, his inward confusion, no sooner had his guests entered Foxwood Court, than they expressed a wish to see the place called the Maze, and requested Sir Karl to conduct them to it.

"I was telling Panton about the Maze last night—talking of the Court and its surroundings," observed the General. Panton does not believe it possible that one could lose oneself in any maze whatever: so I promised him he should have a try at it. You will afford us the opportunity of seeing it, Sir Karl."

"I—I am not sure," stammered Karl, utterly taken aback, while his wife's face flushed a burning red. "I hardly think it is in my power, General. The lady who inhabits it desires to keep herself so very quiet, that I should not feel justified in intruding upon her. She is not in strong health, I believe."

"But we would not think of disturbing the lady," called out all the voices together. "We only wish to see the maze of trees, Sir Karl: not the dwelling-house. What's her name?"

"Grey."

"Well, we shall not hurt her. Does she live by herself?"

"While her husband is abroad. I am sure she will not choose to be intruded upon."

Sir Karl might as well have talked to the winds. All opposed him. Of course there was no suspicion that *he* had any personal objection;

only that he wished to respect the scruples of his lady-tenant. At length, the General declared he would go over to Mrs. Grey, ask to see her, and personally prefer the request. Poor Karl was at his wits' end. He saw that he should not be able to stem the storm—for he dared not be resolute in the denial, so fearful was he always of arousing any suspicion of there being a mystery in the place—and he was fain to yield. He would take them over, he said; but not before he had sent a note to say that they were coming. This he insisted on; it would be but common politeness, he urged; and they all agreed with him.

Hastily writing a few words to Mrs. Grey in his own room, he called Hewitt to take the note over, and gave him at the same time a private message to deliver to Ann Hopley. Of course Karl's object was to warn his brother to keep out of sight—and Mrs. Grey too. Hewitt looked more scared than his master.

"To think of their wanting to go over *there*!" he exclaimed.

A few minutes, and Hewitt came back with a message. Mrs. Grey's compliments to Sir Karl Andinnian, and he was at liberty to bring his friends within her gates if he pleased. So they all started; Lucy with them.

Lucy with them!

The ladies had assumed it to be so much a matter of course that their hostess should accompany them, that Lucy, all timid in her self-consciousness, saw not her way clear to any plea of excuse. And it might be that, down deep in her woman's frail heart, there was a hankering longing to see the inside of that place which contained her rival. In the midst of her indecision she glanced at Karl and hesitated. But he saw not the look or the hesitation: for all the sign he gave out, she was as welcome to go to the place as these guests were.

The party started, passing out at the grand gates of Foxwood. Between that spot and the Maze, short though it was, they encountered Mr. Cattacomb. Miss Blake took upon herself to introduce him, and to ask him to accompany them, saying they were going to see that renowned show-place, the Maze.

"I did not know we had a show-place in the neighbourhood," drawled Mr. Cattacomb in his affectation.

"Neither have we," curtly rejoined Sir Karl, who would willingly have pitched Mr. Cattacomb over a mile elsewhere, but did not see an excuse for doing it. "The Maze was never constituted a show-place yet, Miss Blake. I feel anything but comfortable at intruding there to-day, I assure you. Between my wish to gratify my friends, and my fear that it may be objectionable to the occupant of the Maze, I am in a blissful state of uncertainty," he added in a laughing kind of way, for the general benefit, fearing he might have spoken too pointedly and shown that he was really ill at ease.

"Sir Karl is always ultra-sensitive," remarked Miss Blake—and a keen observer might have fancied there was some sarcasm in her tone.

Karl rang the clanging bell—which might be heard far and wide; and Ann Hopley appeared, the key of the gate in her hand, and curtsied to the company as she admitted them.

"My mistress desires me to say, Sir Karl, that she hopes the gentle-people will see all they wish to see," cried the woman aloud, addressing the rest as much as she did Sir Karl. "Mrs. Grey hopes they will pardon her not appearing to welcome them, but she is not well to-day and has to keep her room."

"Mrs. Grey is very kind," returned Sir Karl. "We shall be cautious not to disturb her."

They filed of their own accord into the maze. The old trees had not been so beset with gay tongues and laughter for many a day. One ran here, another there; they were like schoolboys and girls out for a holiday. Ann Hopley was about to wind her way back when the clanging bell at the gate once more sounded, and she turned back to open it. Karl, never at rest—as who could be, knowing what he knew—looked after her while he talked with the rest; and he saw that the visitor was a policeman.

His heart leaped into his mouth. Careless in the moment's terror of what might be thought of him, he broke off in the middle of a sentence to the General, and returned to the gate. His face was never very rosy, but every vestige of colour had forsaken it now. At a collected moment, he would have remembered that it was not in *that* way his brother would have been sought out—in the person of one solitary unarmed policeman—but fear scares probability away. Worse than all, the rest came flocking to the gate after him.

"Grey, ain't it?" the policeman was saying to Ann Hopley. He had a paper in his hand and a pencil.

"Mrs. Grey," replied the servant.

"Mrs. Grey. There ain't no husband, I think?"

"No."

"What's her Chris'en name?"

A warning glance from Sir Karl's eyes, cautioning Ann Hopley to be on her guard. In truth it was not needed: the woman was caution itself and had her ready wits at hand always. Karl saw what it was—some parish paper about to be left—and was recovering his inward equanimity.

"My mistress's Christian name? Mary."

"Mrs. Mary Grey," repeated the policeman, writing down the name on the paper. "You'll please to give it her," he added, handing the paper in. "It have got to be attended to."

"All tax-papers for Mrs. Grey must come to Foxwood Court," inter-

posed Sir Karl. "Mrs. Grey takes the house furnished, and has nothing to do with the taxes."

"Beg pardon, Sir Karl, but that there's a voting paper for a poor-law guardian," said the man, touching his hat.

"Oh, a voting-paper. Let it go in then," concluded Sir Karl. Mrs. Grey had no more to do with voting than she had with taxes: but Sir Karl let it pass.

They were in the maze again: Ann Hopley having wound herself out of sight with the paper. Mr. Panton, the disbeliever, wound *himself* in and out of the trees and about the paths; but the voices always guided him back again.

"What a delightful place, Sir Karl,!" cried Mrs. Panton. "Quite like a Fair Rosamond's Bower."

Sir Karl laughed in reply. And—as Miss Blake noticed—there was not a trace of shame in his face. Lucy's colour, though, rose painfully.

"Let me see! it was a silken thread, was it not, that guided Queen Eleanor to her rival?" continued Mrs. Panton. "A cruel woman! I wonder whether she carried the bowl of poison in her hand?"

"I wonder if the woman who destroyed the queen's happiness, had any forewarning in her dreams of the fate in store for her?" retorted Miss Blake sharply—for she was thinking of another case, very near to her, that she judged to be analogous. "For her punishment, it is to be hoped she had."

"Oh, but you know she was so lovely, poor thing! One can but pity her; can we Lady Andinnian?"

"I know nothing of it," spake Lucy, in so chafed a tone that Karl turned to look at her.

"My opinion is, that the king should have taken half the bowl," said Miss Blake. "That would have been even justice, Mrs. Panton."

"Well, well, judge it as you will, Fair Rosamond was very beautiful, and her fate shocking. Of course the queen was incensed; naturally: and the crime of poisoning in those days was, I suppose, looked upon as no crime at all. I have always wished the queen had been lost in the maze and the poison spilt."

"Suppose we get lost in this one!"

It was Miss Lloyd who spoke, hurriedly and somewhat anxiously. It brought most of them around her.

"There's no danger here, is there? Sir Karl, you know the way out, I suppose?"

Karl evaded the question. "If the worst came to the worst, we can set on and shout," he observed.

"But *don't* you know the clue? Is there not a clue? There must be!"

"I see nothing of the kind," returned Karl. "You forget that I am

almost a stranger in the neighbourhood. We shall be all right. Don't fear."

How Lucy despised him for his deceit! She felt that he must have the clue: how else could he let himself in with his key—at least, with any purpose of finding his way further in after it? Miss Blake caught her eye; and Lucy turned away, sick at heart, from the compassion it wore.

Sir Karl's "Don't fear" had been reassuring, and they dispersed about the maze and lost themselves in it, very much as Miss Blake had once done. Mr. Cattacomb kept asking questions about the mistress of the Maze: why she lived there alone, where her husband was: for all of which Sir Karl could have struck him. He, Karl, would have contrived to keep them from the boundaries near the house: but they were as nine to one, and went whither they would: and, as had been Miss Blake's case, they got within view of it at last.

"Oh, what a pretty place!" was the involuntary exclamation from more than one.

It did look pretty: pretty and very cheerful. The windows of the house were open; the door of the porch was fastened back, as if to invite entrance. Not a sign or symptom existed of there being any cause for concealment.

So far good, and Karl felt satisfied. But, as his eyes went ranging far and wide in their longed-for security, there was no doubt that he somewhere or other caught sight of his imprudent brother; for his face changed to an ashy paleness, and he groaned in spirit.

"Adam is surely mad," was his mental cry.

Ann Hopley, who had probably been waiting about, stepped up, and asked with much civility if they would like to walk in-doors and rest. Sir Karl, looking at his friends, as if for acquiescence in his denial, declined peremptorily. "We have *no right* to intrude," he whispered: and the General said so too.

"This might really do for a Rosamond's Bower!" cried Mrs. Panton. "It is a sweetly pretty place."

The lawn was level as a bowling-green; the flowers and shrubs surrounding it were well-kept, fragrant, and blooming. Mounted on a ladder, nailing some branches against a wall that probably belonged to a tool-house, was the toothless old gardener, his knees swollen and bent, his white smock frock rolled up around him.

"That's the gardener at his work, I suppose?" observed the General, whose eyes were dim.

"Yes, that's Hopley," said Karl.

"What d'ye call his name, Sir Karl?"

"Hopley. He is the woman's husband."

"I had a servant once of that name when I was quartered at Malta. A good servant he was, too."



"That man yonder looks ill," remarked Mrs. Panton.

"I fancy he has rheumatism," said Sir Karl. "How is your husband?" he added to Ann Hopley.

"Pretty middling, sir, thank you. He is getting in years you see, gentlefolks, and is not as strong as he was."

"Will you be so good as precede us through the maze and let us out," said Sir Karl to her. "I think it is time we went," he added to the others: "we have seen all there is to see."

Ann Hopley, key in hand, went winding through the Maze, in and out of the numberless paths. It seemed to those following her that they only went round and round—just as it had seemed to Miss Blake that former day; and it took some time to get through it. The Reverend Mr. Cattacomb called it "a pilgrimage."

She was crafty, that faithful woman. Just as she had led Miss Blake a needlessly round-about way, so she led them now. Had she taken them direct through, who knew but they might have caught some inkling of the clue? While opening the gate, General Lloyd would have put half-a-crown into her hand. She would not take it.

"I'd rather not, sir; I've done nothing to merit it. Our mistress pays us both well. Thank you, sir, all the same."

Crossing the road from the maze, the party came right in view of Clematis Cottage and Mr. Smith, who was leaning over the gate of it and staring with all his might. He raised his hat to the ladies generally, and then accosted Sir Karl, saying he had taken the plan, asked for, to the Court.

"Thank you," replied Karl.

"Who *is* that man?" cried Captain Lloyd with some energy as they went on. "I am sure I know him."

"His name's Smith," replied Karl. "He is a sort of agent on my estate."

"Smith—Smith! I don't recollect the name. His face is quite familiar to me, though. Where can I have seen it?"

Karl longed in his heart to ask whether the face had ever belonged to the name of Salter; but he did not dare. There had been a peculiar expression in Mr. Smith's eyes as he spoke to him just now, which Karl had read aright—he was sure Smith wanted to speak to him privately. So, after the rest had entered the home gates, he turned back. The agent had not stirred from his place.

"What have they been doing there, Sir Karl?" he asked, with a peremptory action of his hand towards the Maze.

Karl explained. He did not dare do otherwise.

"Curious fools!" cried the man angrily. "Well, no harm's done, sir. Seeing you all come out of the gate, I could not believe my eyes, or imagine what was up."

"I fancied you wished to speak to me, Mr. Smith."

"And so I do, Sir Karl. The letters were late this morning—did



you know it? They've only just been delivered. Some accident I suppose."

"I only know that none came to Foxwood Court this morning."

"Just so. Well, Sir Karl, I've had one; ten minutes ago. I wrote to make inquiries about that paragraph in the newspaper, and this was the answer to my letter. It is as I thought. There's nothing known or suspected at all at headquarters; neither at Scotland Yard nor Portland Island. It was the work of the penny-a-liner, hang him!"

"To whom did you write?"

"Well, that's my business, and I cannot tell you. But you may rely upon what I say—and set your mind at rest. I thought you'd like to know this, Sir Karl, as soon as possible."

"Thank you," replied Karl.

He went back to his guests, his brain busy. Was this true, that Smith said? who then was Smith that he could get this information? But Karl was rather inclined to believe it was *not* true; and that Smith was saying it for a purpose.

*(To be continued.)*



## SCARBOROUGH.

THE summer or autumn holiday has become almost an institution. Some of us are sufficiently old to remember the time when such a thing as the going out for change or rest or recreation was not thought of once in a life-time. Except when necessitated by illness, families of the middle classes were content to remain quietly in their homes : journeys of this kind were supposed to pertain exclusively to their betters. Even aged men and women in those days would tell you that they had never seen the sea in their lives : and for the most part they never did see it to the end. All this has changed. Whether it is that the increased wear and tear of society, the continual bustle that we all seem to live in necessitates a periodical season of relaxation, or whether constitutions are becoming less enduring, I do not know : but, that these intervals of rest from labour are now deemed absolutely essential, and in many cases are so, is certain. A large number of us could not at all get on without them ; mind or body would break down.

The question that comes creeping into households now, as the hot sun begins to make the earth sultry and ourselves weary, is no longer "Shall we go out for a change?" but "Where shall we go?" And I have begun to think that it would be a vast accommodation, really a boon, if some man, whose experiences qualify him for it, and whose judgment (based on fact) is reliable, would issue a small, plain book, to enlighten the public upon the relative merits of each sea-side place, and what its peculiar properties of air may be expected to do for those seeking it. Is there nobody to write one?

Some—and a vast many they are—leave home for custom's sake only : their daily lives are easy, and all they want is change of scene and amusement. To these it does not matter where they go : be the place what it may, high in the mountains or down in the valleys, cold as Siberia or hot as the torrid zone, binding for the loosened nerves or soothing for the lung-cough, it is all the same, provided the resort be frequented by the gay world, pleasure-seekers like themselves. But there is another class to whom such considerations are of vital importance. Those who pass their lives in labour of head, or hand, or brain ; who can snatch barely a month (too often not as much) from their work and cares, who are in the extremest need of a sojourn in some health-giving place, so as to be enabled to continue the toil of life. It is to them that some reliable information would be as a gift. A man of nerves and brain alike unstrung would get no good from a hot and relaxing atmosphere ; while another whose chest or lungs may be

giving way would only receive additional harm in a cold one. And it sometimes happens that mistakes are made: we go in ignorance to the wrong place, and only find it out when it is too late to be rectified.

Take the *generality* of people, and they will not be able to tell you whether a place is bracing or relaxing. Except from hearsay: and hearsay is not always correct. They will go and stay there, and come away, and know no more than the man in the moon what the peculiar properties of the air may be. Some places that bear the reputation of being bracing are in reality not so; others, called warm, have cold winds that search an invalid through and through.

"Go to Scarborough," was a piece of advice tendered last year, when some of us were in great need of renovation. Over-taxed nerves and brain, altogether worn out with work—some bracing place where change of scene and rest might be had, was essential as is the saving hand to the drowning man. Above all, we had to look to the air: that it should be of that renovating, strengthening, pure character that is in itself a tonic. "Go to Scarborough," came the reiterated advice: "you'll get it at Scarborough." And to Scarborough, accordingly, we proceeded full of confidence and hope, intending to stay two or three months, and fully expecting to return home so refreshed and well as to rival the man who went to the mill and was ground young again.

And, after this my one experience of Scarborough, I am enabled to say that, in spite of its reputation for bracing qualities, a more enervating, depressing, relaxing place than it proved to be to me, and that it has proved and no doubt does daily prove to some others, can scarcely exist. It may be, that it is only to those who are in dire need of a truly bracing air—an air that makes you for the time feel light and young again without the mill—that Scarborough is pernicious. I repeat the word—pernicious. A good deal has been said latterly about its drainage: it is possible that the drainage has been as bad as drainage can be; but I daresay not worse than that of most other sea-side places. At any rate, we knew nothing and thought nothing of the drainage, good or bad; and, as far as I know still, it had nothing whatever to do with the effects felt. It has been our desirable lot to live mostly in bracing places: and perhaps that made Scarborough all the worse for me. Save for the above-mentioned fatigue of nerves and brain, the painful weariness arising from long-continued over-work, I was as well in health as I wished to be. I could not say that, when I had stayed a short while at Scarborough.

The very first evening of our arrival I felt an unaccountable lassitude and weariness. "The effect of the long journey," said the landlady of the hotel to whom we had written to order rooms. It might have been: but the sitting at my ease in a comfortable railway carriage never fatigued me yet. The next morning I was more weary still, and the next after it also, and the next—and so on. We changed the

hotel for rooms on the upper part of the Esplanade, where the view was charming and the quiet indoors unbroken. But it did nothing for me. A lassitude, than which nothing could be more painful, short of actual pain; a disinclination to stir out or to walk; a gradual falling-off of appetite; a tendency to lowness of spirits never before experienced; an utter failing of energy; sleepless nights; in short, all the symptoms that arise from a hot and relaxing air I had the pleasure of feeling for the first time in my life. The first two or three days had been very warm; the next fortnight—more I think—was so cold that we were glad to have taken a box of warm clothing. "The climate may be too bracing for you," said a friend to whom I complained, a physician, and who was staying at Scarborough like ourselves: but when I told him what my past experience of bracing climates had been, and how well I am in them, he admitted that Scarborough might not be quite so bracing as all that. "To tell you the truth, then," said he, confidentially, "I think it must be the liver. I am told that Scarborough has a tendency to disturb that." "So far as I know, my liver was all right when I came," was what I answered. "Ah, but the place, they say, has a tendency to touch it up," said he. "And if it has touched up mine, what ought I to do?" I naturally asked. "Oh, just bear any little lassitude or discomfort of feeling for a week or two," said he, "and you will find yourself better than ever you were: that, at least, is what they tell me."

So I went on, bearing in all hope: privately convinced in my own mind that it was the relaxing air of the place that was telling on me, and that only. We particularly wanted to stay on; for, later, some friends were intending to join us: and I am sure if trying to get well and "making an effort" towards it would have effected it, well I should have got.

But no. Each day that succeeded the other only made me worse and worse. The lassitude, the weariness, the dejection (I had never known *that* before), the disinclination to walk or stir, the appetite failing me more and more, all increased; strength, both of mind and body, was gone: I could not have written a difficult page to save my life; only a few lines of letter-writing proved an intolerable burden. "If I stay here I shall be laid up," I said: and at the month's end we left; Scarborough having done me harm instead of good. The heat then was intense; but no sooner had we reached York, purposing to make a short stay there, than all those distressing sensations left me. I was not ground young again; no, nor well; but spirit and energy and appetite had returned, and I felt nearly as much myself as I had before going to Scarborough. In fact, there existed no doubt, and can exist no doubt, that it was Scarborough itself that made me ill. From the night of entering it to the morning of leaving it, I never for one minute felt well.

We can hear things when too late. Many friends since, to whom I have related my experience, have said "We could have told you so: Scarborough has served us just the same, and we would not think of going there when we want to be braced." They were speaking of past years; not of last year. But that many people did suffer there last year in precisely the same way that I did, they can testify to. Whether it is the usual thing to do so I have no means of knowing, not being acquainted with the habitués of Scarborough. It might have been that last year was an exceptionally unhealthy year at the watering-place—as England had unhappily too good cause to learn later—but that Scarborough air is *not* the bracing air rumour assigns it, is sure and certain. In a case like this, how good it would be if we had but some safe guide to enlighten us as to the truth beforehand. I went later to a really bracing place of pure air, to try and undo what Scarborough had done; but the month spent at Scarborough was a month worse than wasted.

The very situation of the place seems to me to be enough to whisper a warning. Surrounded almost by hills, the town down in a kind of bay, or inlet, how can bracing air be its element? Whence can it come to it? All the month we were there I never once saw the sea with the slightest tendency to roughness. I never saw anything that I could call a real wave. We had plenty of wind sometimes on land, but the sea had none of it. Oh where was the salt spray that dashes over one at other places? Certainly not that month at Scarborough. It was either an exceptional month (as to sea winds), or else Scarborough's sea is itself exceptional in the matter of wooing them.

One day we went to Filey: a bare place with a bare beach; altogether a very small colony indeed. Going into a shop to buy some fruit, I asked the man—who came from his dinner to serve me—whether he considered Scarborough a bracing place. He burst out laughing. "Why no winds can come anigh it," said he; "we call it a'most inland." Just what my own observation had suggested: but then how is it that Scarborough has got up its fine bracing character?

I can readily understand that people who live habitually in relaxing air, or who go out with no specific need of better, may find benefit from the change to Scarborough. We all know how valuable is change of scene, and how beneficially it alone will act on the frame. But that others who do need it go there and find no ill effects, I cannot believe. To such as myself it is not only that the place is productive of no good but of positive harm. Had I stayed in London and taken rest there, I might have felt the need of change as a relief to sameness and weariness, but I should not have been made ill, as I was at Scarborough. "Some three or four years ago," said an acquaintance to me the other day, "my wife and I wanted a spell of bracing and pure air, and we were recommended to Scarborough. We went; and took rooms at the Prince of Wales's hotel at the end of the Esplanade.



*Seven weeks* we stayed in that place; each week, one after another as it came round, hoping to feel some of the benefit we had gone to find. In vain. Languid, weary, inert, want of appetite—these were all the symptoms that came near us; and we came away at last considerably less fitted for the bustle and duties of life than we were when we entered it." Mine was exactly their experience over again.

Let not Scarborough grumble at seeing this bit of truth made public. It will not hurt the favourite place: it will not detract one iota from its popularity. The few who need the great renovating tonic, which only certain fine and rarefied air can impart, are but as units amid the tens of thousands. The town is too great an idol with its devotees—flocking to it, as they do, from all quarters near and distant—to be easily displaced from its shrine.

Scarborough has been called the Queen of English watering places. I think justly—putting out of consideration the quality of its air. It is very pretty. Sitting at the windows of the Esplanade—and, for the view, those of the *upper* sitting-rooms are the best—the scene is charming. Some of the famed Continental bays are not more beautiful than this. The gentle sea, like unto a lake, flowing in with the softest and slowest ripple under the shining sunlight; the little boats lazily gliding on it; the busy sands; the town lying back; the picturesque green hill with its houses, one above another, and surmounted by its castle; the blue of the sky mingled with the blue of the water—it is all most fascinating to gaze upon.

Some fashionable people—those of the upper ten—some would-be fashionable, and shoals of imitators, outsiders altogether, crowd Scarborough. The public residence at the hotels with the free-and-easy intercourse, the gossip, and the dancing, has its attractions for the million: it is their one glimpse of "life" throughout the year. The daily routine is delightful to young ladies, for it involves much display of dress: and in these advanced times mothers appear to consider it expedient to sanction what their daughters like. Breakfast in the morning in the public room and in a fascinating breakfast toilette. Down to the Spa at eleven in costume, to hear the band and talk and flirt till one. Luncheon then. Drives in the afternoon; meetings on the sands; shopping—anything. Dinner: a very elaborate attire for this: and then down to the Spa and the band again. Elderly people find the getting up from the Spa two or three times a day a task, especially if they live on the Esplanade. Younger ones enjoy it to their hearts' content.

Anything more noticeable in its way than the evening scene at the Spa, inexperienced eye never saw or witnessed. During the height of the season two bands play: one at one end of the terrace, one at the other. All the seats on either side the terrace and in the circling space adjoining it are filled, while promenaders so crowd the walk as



to jostle each other. For two or three mortal hours do they march about to be stared at. Some are in morning dress, but quite *en grande tenue*; some are in evening dress; and a very great proportion are in attire so extraordinary as to be fit for a carnival abroad or to frighten the crows at home. Between the one band and the other do these walking devotees pass: and when the lamps are lighted and the moonlight plays upon the waters, and the hum of the voices mixes with the music of the band and both with the trampling of the feet, one may shut the eyes for a minute and wake up again and wonder what the scene can possibly mean, and whether we are in this world or another previously unknown.

"This place puts me in mind of Dieppe," cried a lady one night, sitting amid a neighbouring group—and she waved her hand to indicate the passing promenaders. "And me; and me," came the assenting answers. "It's exactly Dieppe."

It put *me* in mind of a gilt-and-gingerbread imitation of it. At least, the company, for the most part, did. Where the extraordinary people had come from was a marvel: where they would betake themselves and their costumes to when their month at Scarborough had expired, was a greater marvel still. Perhaps the really better visitors, as a whole, do not go to Scarborough until September—and this was in July and August. At any rate the panorama was curious, well worth seeing as an experience. But there seemed plenty of enjoyment; and that's a great thing.

Scarborough in its Spa arrangements is not all perfection: something must be done before it can rival Dieppe. It has every natural advantage; for the bare, flat, confined grounds around the Etablissement at Dieppe cannot be compared with the grand heights, the shady walks, and pleasant seats, towering over the Spa at Scarborough. It is the arrangements that are defective. Except during an entertainment, the rooms at the Spa are locked up; the only one that remains open being that where refreshments are served. The result is, that if a shower of rain come on when the terrace is crowded, all who cannot press into the refreshment room or shelter themselves as they best may under the roof of the veranda, enjoy a good soaking. There is plenty of time to get that, before you can reach the town by way of the bridge, or climb up the heights to the Esplanade. The Spa, under its present management, is an out-of-door resort; nothing more: in bad weather it is practically useless.

In this respect it contrasts most unfavourably with Dieppe. There the rooms of the Casino are always open. In seasons of sudden storm or of wind, when the rain descends in straight-down bucket-fuls, or the waves dash over the terrace wall, we have the rooms as a refuge. When the cold weather comes on before its time, and the terrace puts on its draughts, the large light windows of the Casino salons are filled

with fair workwomen busy with their embroidery, the capacious reading room with its readers ; and the band plays inside instead of out. The Casino is therefore independent of weather : and when entertainments—a concert or a play—are held, a few minutes will suffice for the handy French attendants to bring in and place the rows of chairs. This is what is lacking at Scarborough : but I presume the Spa has not been built with the necessary accommodation, and the chairs, or benches, have to remain in their places, and fill up the room always.

One would think Scarborough kept gold in the room. About to go to an evening dramatic entertainment—Paul Pry, and the Trial from *Pickwick*, if anybody is curious on the point, with Mr. Toole as Paul and as Serjeant Buzfuz—I wished to ascertain somewhat of the arrangement and situation of the seats before taking the tickets. In the morning, catching sight of a woman inside, dusting, I tried the door, found it unlocked, and was bold enough to walk in. Up rushed a man from behind in a great commotion.

“You must not go inside. It is against rules.”

“I only wish to see the arrangements of the seats previous to taking tickets for to-night. I am a stranger.”

“All the same. It’s not allowed. You can go inside when the play is on.”

“What harm can I do? It is but for a minute, you understand.”

“But rules is rules.”

Now I wonder whether he feared I might steal the chairs? The dusting woman came up then. She looked surprised at the invasion, but was very civil ; and she showed me which the best seats were, and gave any information I asked for. Still, as I say, one would think treasures were kept there : and incivility does not tend to conciliate strangers.

Another mistake is the presence of children and their attendants in the evening. When the terrace is so filled with grown-up people that it is difficult to move, the racing and running about of shouting children—some of them girls and boys of ten or twelve, who should have learnt better—and the pushing-by of the nurses after the little ones is, to say the least of it, inconvenient. You would find nothing of that at Dieppe : nurses and children are not admitted in the evening. Neither should they be at Scarborough.

In one respect Dieppe and Scarborough cannot be compared. The sea of the one and the sea of the other are so different that it seems like a joke to call both by the same name. Sit on the terrace at Scarborough when you will, peeping through the little turret apertures, the sea below is always smooth ; the tide steals in or steals out calmly and all but noiselessly ; stand up and look out beyond, and you will not see a wave. I looked in vain for one all that month. But now, take your seat on the terrace at Dieppe, or on that open Plage where

the washerwomen dry their linen, and look *there* at the glorious expanse of sea stretching out far and wide. It is calm as a mirror also sometimes, that sea, but the tide never creeps in ; it brings its waves and its foam with it. More often the sea is turbulent ; sometimes it is as a raging plain, lifting itself mountains high, dashing in with a noise like thunder and flinging its salt waves over the spectators ; but withal inexpressibly grand, and health-giving.

"Do you *never* have it rough here?" I asked of the woman who attends to the Spa-spring, and will sell you pencils or other trifles.

"Oh dear yes. We had a storm last year, and some people were drowned," she answered. "There's a little book with an account of it on the stall, if you would be pleased to buy it."

But in spite of the storm and its disastrous consequences, Scarborough seems to me as though it lay in a bay, rather than on the open sea.

Music abounds. Visitors living on the Esplanade may especially revel in it. Take almost any musical hour. The band is playing (say) "God save the Queen," for it winds up with that loyal strain morning and evening ; a renowned brass company (from London we are told) is flourishing off "Love not," outside the garden gate ; five or six houses below, some black men are singing "Ada with the golden hair" to a guitar and bones ; before the Crown Hotel a child is dancing to "Di tanti palpiti" on an organ. A combination of tunes certainly : but perhaps the old adage may be applied here—the more the merrier : and everybody is not endowed with a fine ear.

Take Scarborough for all in all, it stands unrivalled as the queen of our watering places for those who seek pleasure and social amusement. The town is very good ; ten hundred times better than the poor one of Dieppe ; the hotels for the same pleasure class are very nice, the private lodgings are excellent ; the provisions good and not dear ; the tradespeople most obliging ; the walks and scenery admirably picturesque. Nobody could wish a more delightful place to go to than this ; or find one if they did wish it. But for the few who require the rarefied, bracing, and pure air spoken of above, it will not do ; they must keep away. I might think—and no doubt should have thought—that last year was an exceptional year, and my case some exceptional case never to be understood, but for learning what others have experienced as well, then and in the years previous.

It is possible that last year, from some disturbing cause in the sanatory laws, was a bad year at Scarborough. We heard of a good deal of sickness while we were there ; especially among children. Of the sickness the world was fated to hear of later, none then had any forewarning prevision. It nearly cost England dearly. The drainage has been blamed for that : perhaps not so much the general drainage as the particular drainage pertaining to one of the

houses there. Lord Chesterfield died; suddenly cut off in his prime; in the midst of health and life and hope, was he. The Prince of Wales was brought to the brink of the grave; and was only saved—who can doubt it?—to a nation's prayers.

Oh what an illness it was!—what a protracted time of fear, anxiety, and suspense! Never will it be forgotten by England, until we who endured it all, watching and waiting, shall have passed away. Nothing like unto it was ever before experienced: nothing like unto it, let us hope and trust, will be visited on us again. The illness of the Prince Consort ten years before bore no analogy, so far as alarm went, to this illness; because almost as soon as it was then known that sickness existed at Windsor, the great bells tolled out their solemn dirge. In that case there was no public suspense, or as good as none; for the danger and the death became realized almost together. On the morning of the 14th of December 1861 the newspapers issued the following announcement in large type:

SERIOUS ILLNESS OF THE PRINCE CONSORT.

(From the Court Circular.)

WINDSOR CASTLE, Dec. 13.

A bulletin of the health of the Prince Consort was issued this day:—"His Royal Highness the Prince Consort passed a restless night, and the symptoms have assumed an unfavourable character during the day.

"JAMES CLARK, M.D.

"HENRY HOLLAND, M.D.

"THOMAS WATSON, M.D.

"WILLIAM JENNER, M.D.

"Windsor Castle, Dec. 13. Saturday, 2 A.M."

Between 1 and 2 o'clock this morning His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales left the South-Western Railway terminus by special train, a message having been received by the Prince that his presence was required at Windsor Castle.

On that same evening, the 14th—as we all too well remember—the Prince Consort died. There was no time allowed for fears, or hopes, or prayers: we were spared all that; but the shock was only the more overwhelming and terrible.

This time was different: it brought the exact opposite. The agony of protracted suspense and doubt endured seemed enough for a lifetime; but the death was mercifully averted.

Will the Prince of Wales ever be able fully to picture to himself, I wonder, what that suspense was? I think not. None could, unless they had witnessed it. Before this happened, it had become the habit with certain discontented, anarchial spirits to find fault with the Prince. He did not do this, or he did do the other: he was wild; he was careless; he was irreligious; the people did not care for him. Anything they chose to say they did say: it is so very safe to abuse the absent. Had any special miracle for the purpose of confutation been wrought, it could scarcely have accomplished it in a more effectual manner than did this illness. The people not care for their Prince? It almost seems as though the dangerous sickness came to prove to them how deeply and loyally he was cared for, and to give disaffection the

lie for good. Had they taken the trouble to sum up his good qualities, they might have seen how largely his virtues overpowered his defects. The Prince is but human : and a human man was never perfect yet. His goodnature, his true affability, his genial kindness, his anxiety to please—whilst he was lying in the arms, as it seemed, of approaching death, they could recal all these and other gifts, so desirable in one who is to be a king and ruler. The loss the country would sustain in him was anticipated with a feeling very like terror. Without the Prince and heir what trouble might not England come to?—for there was no one to replace him. But the personal regrets were felt most : grief and suspense reigned everywhere.

Not a family but has its own mental records of that painful time ; records that can never quit the memory. From the duke to the peasant no other subject than this stirred the sympathies, mingling itself with all the little concerns of every-day life. One momentous question sat in each heart—will he live or die ?

When the relapse came it was all the worse felt, from the fact that hope was then being entertained of a recovery. The chief danger was looked upon as over ; the Prince was supposed to have turned the corner, and public confidence had set in. It was very sudden, that relapse ; it came upon people like a thunder-bolt. The recollections of one household may serve for most households : a little alteration in details there may be, but none in the shock.

A. was late in coming home that night, and we were at dinner. When he entered the room I saw something was the matter. But nothing could have been further from my thoughts than the truth.

"Have you heard?" he asked—knowing quite well we could not have heard.

"Heard what?"

"About the Prince."

The room fell into a stillness like that of death. None dared ask *what* about the Prince. We only looked at A.

"He is dying."

A minute or so ; and then the first shock gave place to disbelief. A. was blamed, as a kind of welcome outlet to the feelings.

"How can you bring home such a report? It cannot be true."

"It is too true," he answered. "A change for the worse took place to-day. I have read the bulletin posted up. 'The Prince is sinking fast.' Her Majesty has gone to Sandringham."

The bulletin was not official—as we found on the morrow ; but it could not have been more implicitly believed in had all the faculty of London issued it.

From that night, the suspense and the true fear set in. The Prince was indeed lying between life and death : and nobody dared think the result would be life. The dreaded Fourteenth of December was ap-



proaching : a superstitious impression took hold of the public, that that fatal day of ten years before would again be fatal now ; and despair ruled, instead of hope.

The next few days we only lived in news ; in the tidings brought from time to time. Had a son or brother been lying in extremity, the anxiety for him could scarcely have been more intense. To those who do not reside in the heart of the Metropolis, but in its less frequented suburbs, it was a trial when half a day would pass and they got no fresh information. Omnibus conductors, coming from the city or from Whitehall, were eagerly questioned ; the little railway stations were besieged. And the mornings and the evenings and the mid-days succeeded to each other ; and there was no hope and no change.

On the Sunday morning, the 10th, there was no newspaper. A. was sent to inquire at the station, or of any cabman or conductor he could light upon. Nothing came of it ; only just one solitary grain of comfort—that the Prince was not dead. But it was then many hours since the last report left Sandringham, and even that bit of relief was not reliable now.

"Run to the station again," was said to A. as we went to church. And he did so : but they had heard nothing further. Who will forget that Sunday ? The clergyman might have heard what we had not ; and the suspense until the Prince's name could be mentioned—or not mentioned—in the litany, was intense. Thoughts went back to the Sunday ten years before, the fifteenth of December, when the omission of that other royal name in its place was the first announcement to many of the calamity that had fallen. It was not omitted this time. With a sensation of relief that few present will ever forget, the words of prayer for Albert Edward Prince of Wales were read out amid quite a sensational silence. And then followed the hidden tears of emotion.

Well, it is of no use to linger over this period or tell of its further days of gloom that had no light. The dreaded fourteenth passed by ; and there came creeping in a little ray of hope ; and then a little more, and a little more, and—the Prince was saved.

But I say I think he can never realize the suspense and the anxiety of the nation collectively and individually ; or imagine the earnest prayers that ascended to the throne of Heaven for a renewal of his life. He may, amidst his intervals of delirium, have caught some notion of the distress and grief immediately around him, from that of his royal mother and his wife, down to the least retainer in his service. And oh, what that distress must have been ! The Queen is a royal lady, the sovereign of a great nation ; but her heart, in its kindly sympathies, in its tender love for her children, is but the same human heart that her subjects bear ; and the Princess, whom we have learnt so to respect and love, mourned and prayed for her husband just as we should mourn and pray. God gave him back to them and to us. His children may



tell the story of those weeks in after years, and talk of it as a special mercy.

The illness brought him nearer to us, and us to him ; his recovery has called up every latent spring of gratitude. The country has deep cause to be thankful for it politically ; its people have, socially ; they like the Prince of Wales too much to lose him. What would have been an irreparable loss to us might have been to him a gain ; for by God's loving mercy he might but have exchanged an earthly for a heavenly crown. But he has been spared to us. And may he live in his renewed life to remember the blessing ; and strive to run his race so as to obtain, when the tear and fret of this poor world shall be over, that eternal crown !

The paper began with Scarborough and has ended with the Prince. But for a long while yet the one will not be disassociated from the other in men's minds ; and thoughts and pen are alike given to run on into wanderings.



## A STORY OF THE DAY.

MARGARET.

THE little country district was very beautiful, but very rustic and primitive; centuries almost behind the rest of the world. No town was near; the parish church was a long way off. The small farmers and the smaller farm labourers got along how they could; half benighted sometimes in regard to the doings of the outer earth. Beyond the hill was a great building; it had been taken of late years, comparatively speaking, and made into a convent. The ladies belonging to it, never themselves seen abroad, kept a school, to which much fame attached amid the Roman Catholics.

Mr. Mead was one of the largest of the small farmers. He was said to be a "warm" man, and to have a good store of gold laid by, accumulated by untiring industry and careful saving. He and his family lived in a very homely fashion; working always, as their forefathers had done before them. The farmhouse stood back from the road, with a garden before it.

It was a lovely day in early summer; and all were busy as bees, including the only daughter of the house, Margaret. Margaret Mead's father, in his fustian breeches, shirt-sleeves, and broad-brimmed straw hat, was sowing seeds in the garden. Margaret's mother was hanging all her old red and blue bed-quilts out in the sun and wind to kill the moths. And Margaret herself was taking down part of the week's washing from the clothes-line.

Just at that time, of all hours in the twenty-four, a handsome barouche passed, drawn by handsome black horses with gold-mounted harness. In the carriage sat two ladies and a young man. The elder lady, stiff and dignified, was looking with turned-away head and haughty indifference at the apple-orchard on the opposite side of the road. But the younger one glanced out with inquisitive scorn at the square red farmhouse and its common surroundings. The young man, however, lifted his hat, and bowed with such tender grace that Margaret forgot all beside.

So she smiled to herself as she snapped off the handkerchiefs and aprons, and thought there was nothing less fair in life than the fragrance of the azaleas that floated up from the hill-side behind the house, and the soft murmur of the bees among the clover-blossoms.

Just before nightfall, as she knelt in the garden-walk, weeding her own particular verbena bed, the garden gate swung back and clashed together again. Margaret looked up, and saw Clarence Davenport, whose glance and bow from the carriage had made the day beautiful;

and immediately her cheeks grew lovelier than the pink verbena in her hand.

"You are sweet as you can be!" said Clarence, coming lightly forward and kissing her hand with chivalrous gallantry, which made the lovely cheeks lovelier.

Then he knelt by her side, and fell to weeding as industriously as though his family had followed gardening since the time of Adam. And there they stayed together, weeding and whispering, until the kitchen window was thrown up, and Mrs. Mead's voice was heard.

"Margaret, the dew is falling. You had better come in."

So Margaret went in as far as the door-steps, where she sat with her lover in the shadow of the clinging woodbine. On one side, a clump of white lilies breathed out sweetness in their sleep; on the other was a white rose-tree; and above all the white climbing moon. Life and love were fresh and fragrant as the evening, and they sat thinking more than they talked, and feeling more than they thought.

By and by Margaret's grandfather came to the door behind them.

"Who is here?" said he, putting out his hand like the patriarch Jacob, to assist his failing sight. "Oh, young Davenport! How do you do to-night, and how are your people? Your mother holds her age as well as any woman I know. You must give her our respects, and tell her to come and see us. Tell her to come in pear-time—she knows what our pears are."

"I do wish that Margaret's family were like Margaret," thought the young lover, wincing a little, as the old grandfather betook himself indoors. His thought perhaps was shadowed in his face; or maybe Margaret felt a magnetic impression borne in upon her unconsciously. One way or another, a sudden shadow fell over the brightness of the summer evening.

"Poor grandfather is very old!" said she, in a tone of mortified apology.

Clarence made no reply, and the shadow deepened upon the night. Presently Margaret spoke again.

"We are common and plain, and altogether different from your people now," said she, with a little sigh. "I am afraid——"

But her sentence went unfinished, for Mr. Davenport put his finger on her lips and interrupted her with a laugh.

"I will tell you what is going on at home, Margaret: now, at this very instant. It is my mother's night to receive, and she is sitting in the stiffest chair she can find, directly under the chandelier, dressed in lilac satin covered with black lace. Whenever anybody comes in, she rises with a good deal of ceremony, and says: 'This is a very pleasant surprise!' Then they talk a little on the weather, a little on the various watering-places, and a little on the new fashions. That is about all; and as soon as the caller has gone, my mother fixes her face

back into proper reception trim, and won't speak or smile for fear of getting it out. As to Laura, she is lounging on a crimson sofa (crimson becomes her complexion best), fanning herself very fast with a spangled fan, and looking dreadfully bored. Do you think I'd rather be here or there?"

Margaret laughed at the description.

He drew nearer, so that he might touch her as he sat. His sister Laura might be in silk and lace like her mother; but she could not look more of a lady than did this young girl in her simple dress of pink gingham. Margaret was but a farmer's daughter, but nature had endowed her with a charming grace.

The moonlight brightened once more, the fireflies flashed up from the marshy meadow beyond the broken stone wall, and the weary, grey old world was as the exiled Paradise.

When Margaret went in, after Mr. Davenport's departure, with the dew on her hair, the brightness of the fireflies in her eyes, and the pink of the azaleas in her cheeks, she found her mother working with the maid in the wide dim kitchen. The freshly ironed clothes hung on poles suspended by cords from hooks in the ceiling, a kettle of potatoes was on the fire, some slices of ham were cut ready for breakfast. There was a pan of batter put to rise on the table for the next day's baking, a great bowl of apples waited to be pared. Margaret, a little dazzled by the sudden candle-light, saw this place with all its homely details; and at the same time, in a kind of double vision, she saw the elegant drawing-room where Clarence Davenport's mother sat in state "receiving." The contrast smote her again with the old quick sense of discord, and her heart ached with a premonitory throb of the pain, telling that something in life is going wrong. Margaret Mead, reared amidst these homely surroundings, did not feel them so intensely as a stranger might: but she had a great deal of native refinement and did feel them keenly.

And who were the Davenports, with their well-appointed barouches and their home-receptions? Why, a few years before—twenty, say—the Davenports had been just what Margaret's family were—farmers. They had lived in a farm close by: the Blickerys had it now. But they had no luck. Crops failed, cattle died, and Mr. Davenport sold off what he had to try his luck elsewhere. Chance led him to dabble in shares: it was the "tide in the affairs of man," and he made his fortune. Two or three years ago he had come to the old country and bought a pretty estate, and there they set themselves up on their grand scale. Mr. Davenport died almost immediately, and his widow, son, and daughter remained. The ladies gave themselves airs, and the farmers laughed at them: but of course there lay a wide distinction between the two now. Clarence Davenport scented it in all his fibres, although his love for Margaret Mead had grown to a strong height in

his heart. He had been reared and educated in accordance with his later position.

"Margaret," said Mrs. Mead the following day, as she sat patching some household garment that wanted mending with a new one, "your father and I have been talking about you."

The quick blush rose to Margaret's cheek as she looked up from the fruit she was stripping. What about? she wondered.

"Your father thinks you've hardly had your proper chance as some other girls have. What can have put it in his head beats me."

"Chance of what, mother?"

"Education. He thinks we took you from school too early, and feels inclined to send you again for another year. Not as a school-girl; you are too old for that; but as a grown-up pupil. Should you like it?"

Like it! The girl's heart and eyes were leaping and dancing with delight. In education at least there might then be no disparity between herself and her lover.

"But could you and the house spare me, mother?"

"We shall have to. Once your father says a thing, he means it. I have sent for your Aunt Elizabeth: and you can give a hand still, I expect, between whiles, Saturday afternoons, or so."

The next morning Margaret was wakened by the singing of a robin on the cherry-tree that rested its long arms on the roof over her head. As she listened, half dreaming yet, the singing mingled with and finally melted into the words of a hymn. Opening her eyes, there stood her Aunt Elizabeth before the square mahogany-framed looking-glass, twisting her brown hair round the back of her head.

"Why, Aunt Elizabeth!" cried Margaret. "Did you come over from Uncle James's last night? That is what made me dream of tea roses. Come here and let me kiss you."

Aunt Elizabeth did not look as though she would make any one dream of tea roses. She was tall and lean and full of angles. Her strong point was not beauty, and certainly it was not dress; for there was not a fashionable thread about her, from her smooth hair to her morocco shoes tied with strings. Mrs. Davenport would have been petrified with horror at sight of such a figure at one of her receptions. But when one had a button to be sewn on or a thorn in the finger, when one had a pain in the head or a pain at the heart, then Aunt Elizabeth looked more beautiful than a king's daughter.

"You've come to stay this time, have you not?" asked Margaret, sitting on the edge of the bed, with her hair in a golden tangle over her shoulders, and an early sunbeam glancing across her bright young cheek.

"I hope so," replied Aunt Elizabeth, heartily. "They won't need me at James's, if they are well. It seems nice to get home again, I

assure you. I always fancy the air is purer here than it is anywhere else," she continued, opening the window and taking a deep breath.

"It seems good to see you back, Elizabeth," said the old grandfather from his elbow chair, as he ate the hot toast she made for his luncheon.

"It seems good to see myself back," returned Elizabeth, who had a way of seeming to be particularly pleased with everybody and of ministering to their needs. Miss Blickery called it deceitfulness.

Miss Blickery herself had no more deceitfulness than a nettle. She sat now on the wood-box with a very stiff white sun-bonnet on her head and a bowl in her hand, having come to borrow some vinegar. She was tall, gaunt, and brown, with a long neck and a face suggestive of hardness.

"Margaret," said she, in a voice as sharp as a hatchet, "I hear Clarence Davenport is paying attention to one of the Bennett girls. Do you know whether it is so?"

Margaret smiled serenely from the height of her girlish self-confidence. Her faith in Mr. Davenport was perfect.

"I am told his people are all for it, especially Mrs. Davenport," pursued Miss Blickery, who despised the Davenports and their airs beyond everything. "The Bennett girls are very extravagant, caring nothing but for dress and show. However, Mrs. Davenport likes that—it suits her ideas; and if her son does not marry to please her she'll disinherit him. She has the power. Old Davenport must have been daft to make such a will."

And, in spite of her strong trust, Margaret's heart fell somewhat as she listened to this. It was quite true: hard though Miss Blickery was, what she said was generally to be depended on.

In the course of the morning Aunt Elizabeth followed Mrs. Mead to the dairy, and began to help her to make up the butter. The man had just finished churning.

"And now tell me why I was sent for in such a hurry," said Aunt Elizabeth. "I arrived too late last night to ask."

"Well, the truth is, Clarence Davenport comes here a good deal, and we fancy the attraction is Margaret," replied Mrs. Mead. "Indeed we know it. I and her father would not object: we like him, though we dislike his mother and sister; and if Margaret is to be his wife——"

"Stay a moment, Ann. Miss Blickery has just said he was to marry one of the Bennetts."

"She said his mother wanted him to. But I don't think Clarence is one to be coerced in that way, and I am sure his whole heart is set on Margaret. Well, as I was saying, her father has taken it into his head that Margaret's education is hardly up to his; that she'd be the better for another year of schooling. We can afford it well, Elizabeth, as



you know : and if she is to marry young Davenport, we'd not like her to be behind the society she'll move in. So Margaret goes to the Sisters next week."

"The Sisters!" exclaimed Elizabeth, amazed and uncertain.

"Yes, the Sisters of the 'Bleeding Heart,'" replied Mrs. Mead, complacently, holding up a lump of butter moulded in the form of a pineapple, and yellow as a cowslip. "There!" she added, with a touch of triumph in her tone; "can Maria beat that?"

"That is beautiful butter! You always did make the nicest and handsomest butter," returned Elizabeth, cordially. Then presently she said, without looking up from the pan of milk she was skimming, "Do you think a convent is exactly the best place to educate Protestant girls in?"

"Margaret's principles are too well established for her to be in any danger," answered Mrs. Mead, with the hasty heat of one who is resolved not to be convinced. "I don't worry myself about that. There is no cause for it. And the convent school is considered the very best. The Bennett girls were educated there. Besides, we don't care to send Margaret too far from us."

Miss Elizabeth said no more. But in her face there sat an expression of sweet and anxious gravity.

The next week Margaret Mead entered on her studies at the Convent of the Bleeding Heart. This consisted of a cluster of stone buildings, old and picturesque, yet with a certain impressive stateliness about them. They were surrounded by a high wall, overgrown with ivy. Inside the enclosure were narrow grounds, plainly but exquisitely kept, with grass and shrubs in front, and a vegetable garden behind and at the sides. The onion bed was surrounded by a border of carnations, and the cabbages by pansies. The beetroot had a belt of verbenas, and you made your way to the potatoes by a narrow pathway through a thicket of cinnamon roses.

Margaret's heart went out of her at the first sight of such perfection of simplicity and harmony. Going in, she found throughout the public rooms the same marvellous neatness and apparently unstudied carelessness. The stainless white walls, the scoured and spotless floors of the school-room, were like the touch of a cool hand on a feverish forehead. Rest and peace and quiet cheerfulness lay everywhere.

There was never any open attempt to draw the Protestant pupils from their faith. Never. That was against the expressly stipulated rules. Margaret never heard a word of argument or persuasion. There was nothing to combat, nothing which challenged her faith or her reason; but always a subtle, impalpable presence in the air of something devotional and picturesque and hidden. At given signals, the teachers and Catholic pupils bowed their heads in silent prayer, signing the cross, and seeming to withdraw from things actual; or with

reverent faces and exclusive bearing they went through some one of the doors leading mysteriously from each room and passage to distant shrines and holy places, from whence floated back to the school-room faint and exquisite music.

At first Margaret looked on with the frightened sort of feeling that intrudes when human beings are engaged passionately in a thing which the outsider cannot understand. Before that feeling had worn itself out—it happened one day after several weeks—she was sent with some message to Sister Agatha. She could not readily find her, and kept on penetrating farther into the recesses of the building than she had ever gone before. Suddenly a panel before her slipped away, and she saw an inner room, darkened from the sun, but in a blaze of soft light, adorned with sweet fresh flowers, glowing fruits, lovely paintings, and brilliant hangings. There was an instant waft of perfume, and a grand cry of music—Heaven's message—sweet, and tender, and soft, and full, and pathetic. It came upon her like a wave of ecstasy, and was almost more than she could bear. Then the panel slipped in place again after some one had passed through, and Margaret went away, stunned and forgetful of her errand, with that wonderful music ringing and echoing like a bell in her memory. All day she heard it; she smelt again the strange perfume, and saw, as in a vision, that glimpse of things unutterable.

How different all this was from the plain, unadorned, and cold service to which Margaret had been accustomed! For the village church (to which they had to walk ever so far, hail or sunshine, wet or dry) was in that unhappy case (there are some such cases existing still) of not being cared for by its pastor. No pains were taken: nothing was done to render the form of worship even decently attractive. The consequence was that prayer-meetings were occasionally held at the farmers' houses—which were, to the young, less attractive still.

As it happened, one of these meetings fell upon this self-same evening; and Margaret went home for it. It was at the Blickerys'. In the falling twilight they went up the hill leading to the commodious old house. It had been a mansion once, but was bleak and drear now, with a weeping ash in front and a row of Lombardy poplars behind. They went into a long room, with a bare floor painted with ochre, and a double row of hard, straight chairs placed around. Some were already occupied by farmers fresh from their harvests, with the smell of the fields yet upon them, and their wives sitting up straight and tired, with close bonnets on their heads and hymn-books in their hands, but looking as though they missed their knitting work. Between the two uncurtained windows was a table, covered with green baize and holding a Bible, some hymn-books, and a pair of iron snuffers on three legs.

The same hymns, the same prayers, the same preaching from the homely men, with their no doubt devotional hearts but too homely

diction. It grated strangely upon Margaret, as she went silently home under the shining light of the great harvest moon.

At another time she might have found comfort in the sweet old hymns, in the tender words of Christ's parables, and in the communion of saints, simple and homely though it had all been—for some of these men and women were as saintly, earnest, and reverent as simple human beings can well be. But now the contrast was too sharp between this angular sort of worship and the bewildering blending of colour and light and sound and scent that had been let down to her, as it were, from some unknown sphere, and of which her mind had been all day full. From that time, Margaret looked with a certain longing sympathy after the Catholic girls as they went out for their secret devotions.

During these days and weeks Mrs. Davenport, her son, and daughter were in their hired summer residence at the sea-side: therefore Margaret was quite easy upon the point of not seeing Clarence. If a thought crossed her at times that he might have written, she remembered that they never yet had corresponded, and felt satisfied.

The lovely autumn weather was prolonged late; other seaside guests lingered, and so did the Davenports. Mrs. Davenport was wise in her generation: she had got, staying with her, the Miss Bennett whose name was Louise, whom she fully determined should be her son's wife. Louise Bennett was a dark-eyed, brilliant girl, differing from Margaret as a peach differs from a peach blossom—both sweet, and fair, and fresh; but one still in the flower, and the other in the richness of ripened fruit.

For ever and for ever it so happened that Mr. Davenport and Miss Bennett were together as naturally as a bee and a blossom. There were drives, and walks, and sails, and quadrilles; where the formality of drawing-room life was forgotten, and where Louise's presence was as perpetual and stimulating as the breath of the sea; until at last everywhere, where she was not, seemed to Clarence Davenport insipid and tasteless as inland air.

On the evening that Margaret was walking thoughtfully home from the prayer-meeting at Mr. Blickery's, Clarence and the young lady were floating on the bay under the light of the same great white moon, the water around them all afire with the dancing glow of the mysterious phosphorescent "meteor of the sea." The boatman at the rudder whistled just above his breath as he steered, and Mrs. Davenport, having for once left off her reception manners, reclined against a pile of cushions and looked at the moon—or slept perhaps. There was the low pulsing of the tide on the far-off shore, the soft plash of the waves against the boat, and the creaking of the cordage that held the dipping sail. It was a fairy boat upon a fairy sea, where the ties and memories of the actual world did not obtrude or obtain.

Louise Bennett had drawn the hood of her Burnous cloak over her

head, and the scarlet lining gleamed out in bewildering contrast with her soft brown eyes and brown floating curls. Mr. Davenport looked at her; listening to the melody of her voice, as she sung a dreamy accompaniment to the whistling of the boatman. Looked and listened did he, until his heart, which was as sweet and as soft as a honeycomb, melted within him. He forgot the past and the future, he forgot his love, he forgot his honour, he forgot he was not to float always, as now, on an enchanted sea. So the secret fancy (it was nothing more) that the companionship of a fascinating girl, fascinating to *and for* him, induces a susceptible man to feel, and that in Mr. Davenport had been growing unconsciously and silently, sprang, without sign or warning, to his eyes, and then to his lips. He was not, after all, much more than a boy. What he said, led away by the tender influence of the situation, he hardly knew. Loving words no doubt, full of idealistic folly. It was the climax the young lady had been scheming and longing for; and she answered him accordingly. "Yes," she "loved him;" she "did love him."

For one delirious instant Mr. Clarence Davenport thought he was in heaven. Then his eye fell on his braided watchguard, Margaret's gift, and he felt himself suddenly hurled to earth, bruised and breathless and dumb. Before he could catch his breath or find his voice, Mrs. Davenport spoke. She was sitting upright now, with the reception-manner full upon her.

"This is a very pleasant surprise to me. My dear young lady, I am delighted to welcome you as my daughter. I have long fancied how it was between you, but feared lest I might be mistaken. My son," she continued, unfastening a ring from her chain, "put this on Louise's finger. It is the ring with which the Davenports have been betrothed for seven generations, and we have a legend that an engagement is not binding unless sealed with this ring. Take it, Clarence."

Clarence Davenport took the ring mechanically, and placed it upon Louise Bennett's finger. His mother had always done everything for him but breathing—excepting in the matter of Margaret Mead—and he came back to the old allegiance with the powerlessness of a charmed bird; almost with a feeling of relief that his life was taken out of his hand.

Yet, after he had given Louise the good-night betrothal kiss and gone to his room, he looked at himself in the glass with loathing and horror. "Engaged to two!" he cried; "engaged to two! Was there ever living man so despicable?"

And all night he tumbled and rolled, trying to turn his back upon himself.

But morning came, and with it Louise, beautiful and varying and exhilarating as the ocean. With it came also Madam Davenport, announcing to everybody, in her stately way, the engagement between

her son and Miss Bennett. "It was a very pleasant surprise," added the wily lady.

And Mr. Davenport's half-formed resolve to tell Louise everything, and to fall in utter humiliation before her, and throw himself upon her mercy, faded away. How *could* he do it? In these things men (and women also) are the veriest cowards. After some inward struggles with his conscience, he resigned himself to *what must be*. And for excuse—or comfort—why he had never said anything decisive to Margaret; and—she was in one part of the world and he in another.

But, for all this plausibility, a something down deep in his heart said that he should never love his wife as he had loved Margaret; and that the sweet happiness of his life had been wrecked.

"What *do* you think?" cried Miss Blickery, coming into Mrs. Mead's best kitchen on a busy day. "I've heard such news."

Mrs. Mead sat at the table paring, winter apples for jelly; Aunt Elizabeth was crossing the room with a beautiful china plate of fresh-made and delicious biscuits.

"It is the first day of Margaret's holidays," said the latter with a sweet smile. "We must feast to-day. But about your news, Miss Blickery?"

"Ah—my news," grimly responded the visitor. "*I* foretold it months ago. The engagement is now made public between Clarence Davenport and Louise Bennett. And I understand Madam Davenport is as pleased as punch!"

At this moment Margaret glided through the open door behind, through which she had heard all, white as a day-lily. She had her arms full of books that she was carrying to her chamber. There she flung them on the bed, and dropped upon a chair by the window overlooking the brown country road. In a kind of wild amaze sat she: and whether the hours flew or whether they did not, she could not have told. She had a bad headache, she said, when some of them came to call her down—please let her be alone.

Gazing out mechanically as the time went, she suddenly saw Mr. Davenport, and thought she must be dreaming. He halted at the gate, and beckoned to her. It was at the side of the house; and none were likely, save herself, to have seen him.

Margaret stole noiselessly down, and they stood under the frost-bitten hop-vine, still clinging with dead fingers over the gate, its sere leaves rustling feebly in the mellow air of the belated autumn. The same lily stalks, that before offered bloom and fragrance to the young lovers, now held up their dry and stricken heads as though in mute token that the spring-time and summer of young love had had its season, and was ended. The only brightness in all the blighted yard was the red seed-cups of the rose-tree; and they were set thickly among thorns.



"O Clarence, I am so glad!" cried Margaret, stretching out her hands with a quivering smile as he came up the walk; for she thought how untrue it had all been. "Miss Blickery has been saying dreadful things—about you and Louise Bennett."

The troubled look of contrition and strangeness in Clarence Davenport's face caught her eyes; and the smile faded off her lips as she dropped her hands with a frightened moan. At the best these two were but as children; with all a child's simplicity and guilelessness.

"I am so—so grieved, Margaret. I am engaged to Louise Bennett."

The colour came surging into Margaret's cheeks, and then she went white as a snowdrop.

"Don't, Margaret, don't! You break my heart! What can I do? I had meant to keep away in my cowardice, but I could not, and I came to tell you. Oh Margaret, don't look so. You know how I love you; you know it; but I have been living in a sea of folly; and my mother—well, she has always done with me what she will. I shall never love her, Daisy—no, though they do make her my wife—as I have loved you."

The peach being out of sight, the peach-blossom looked very sweet and fair to the soft-hearted boy; and he longed to gather her up in his arms and fly away, as he gazed with more than the ghost of his old love in his eyes.

"This is a hard world, Daisy," said he; "and I don't know what to do."

Margaret shivered, and her lips were white and stiff, but she leaned against the gate-post and put out her hand to Clarence. "Good-by!" said she, faintly. "It was so sudden; and—and besides, I have a headache to-day."

"Forgive me, Margaret, forgive me." And wringing her hand, he turned away.

An hour after, Aunt Elizabeth, coming into her chamber, found the poor girl sitting alone. Her hands were listlessly hanging by her side, and her face was grey with the ashes of despair.

"Why, my dear child, what is this?"

"Oh, Aunt Elizabeth, what will become of me?" she cried, her voice a plaintive wail. "I can't live, and I can't die! Will God permit such a dreadful thing to happen? Did anybody ever suffer so before?"

Poor child! poor Margaret! She could get no comfort in such sorrow. Many and many a foot has trod those burning flints before her. Miss Elizabeth, startled for a moment, divined pretty accurately how it must be.

"Our lives here seem strangely ordered, my dear," she said, in a voice like a caress: "only in the broad light of eternity shall we know why such sorrow should come. The soul must have its night as well



as its day, its winter as well as its summer-time ; and God's plans are wise."

"Oh, yes ; but it is such a *hard* world !" moaned Margaret.

The grey, pitiless day went down at last, and another day greyer and more pitiless dawned. Before the household were fairly astir, somebody came from Mr. James Mead's to say little Jamie was ill, and they feared it might be scarlet fever. So Aunt Elizabeth made herself ready and was driven over to help her sister-in-law, Maria, taking with her the only bit of rainbow in all Margaret's black sky.

"If I could get out of sight of everybody ; if I were not obliged to see people, and talk and laugh as though nothing had happened to me !" she said to herself in the depth of her despair. "Oh, if there were but some place where the world might not enter !"

Then the gentle faces of the Sisters came surging before her : why or wherefore she knew not. White, peaceful faces, with a look as of those who have overcome, and after much tribulation have found rest. Every day she yearned more and more for the peace that she fancied dwelt under the shadow of the sacred veil. Until at last one morning she wrapped herself in a grey cloak and glided out from her father's house, thinking never to enter it again.

The foolish child ! She would turn Roman Catholic, she thought. As if the wise amid the Roman Catholics snapped up their converts in that hasty way ! It was a long walk to the convent, and she reached the gate as the chapel bell was calling to prayers. So she went directly to the chapel, and took her place among the kneeling Sisters. The priest who said the mass that day was a white-haired man, with a rich magnetic nature and a fatherly heart. Turned from the domestic life for which he was so well fitted, he gave to all what most men give only to their own. To Margaret's enthusiastic, girlish eyes, Father Dalbraith looked so pure, so noble, so exalted above other people, that it seemed almost like seeing a saint of Heaven in the person of man. And when, after the long and dreamy service, she knelt before him in the confessional, and heard his pitying voice and felt his tender hand upon her head, her heart swelled with adoration and victory, and she thought she had overcome the world.

But Father Dalbraith was just as wise in his generation as Mrs. Davenport had been in hers. In his heart, pitiful though it was, he no doubt laughed at this simple child, who told him she "had come to be a nun."

"My daughter," said he, "life seems hard to you, and you think to escape its troubles by coming among the Sisters. But I do not see how trouble is to be avoided in this world. I look upon it as part of God's plan for our improvement, to purify and make us better. I do not see how shutting our eyes to the fact that it exists will guard us from suffering or sorrow. We are ensnared on all sides in this life. Flying from the

trouble we see, we may meet one we knew not of. But we must be patient; for every day is as a feather in a wing that is bearing us to God. The Church and the Blessed Mother can give you comfort, and you will do well to seek their loving sympathy and strength. But not among the Sisters, my daughter. This is not at present your vocation. Your heart would eat itself away here if you came now. Go home, my child, and live the life that God shall give you; and the Church will not forget you."

At any rate he was truthful and candid. The time, as he knew, had not yet come. There might, besides, have been scandal and talking and blame, and all sorts of unpleasant things. So Margaret went home, and the Church did not forget her. Neither did she forget the Church.

The scarlet fever was a long time running its fiery course among James Mead's children. After that, they continued poor and sickly; and Miss Elizabeth did not come away again. Margaret went back to the convent to school after the holidays: and Mrs. Mead no more dreamt of what might be going on than did her own soup-skimmer. Thus the nuns and the convent, and the priests, and Margaret, all kept their secret: and month by month the subtle enchantment woven round the girl took fuller and more full possession of her soul.

"Has your Margaret turned Roman Catholic?" demanded Miss Blickery, coming to make an afternoon call on Mrs. Mead, in a new bonnet trimmed with blush roses.

Mrs. Mead, sitting in her parlour at work, turned over a boxfull of buttons in her indignation.

"Roman Catholic! No more than you have. What on earth put such a thing into your head, Susan Blickery,?"

"Well, it's said she's professed—whatever that may mean among 'em," returned Miss Blickery. "I had it from good authority."

She said a few things more, all in confirmation, and then took her leave. Mrs. Mead, returning from seeing her to the door, sat down in her arm-chair and fainted away.

By sundry secret signs, taken no notice of at the time, but recalled to memory now, the stricken mother felt sure that her only child had forsaken the faith of her forefathers.

"It will about kill her father," she murmured, wiping the moisture from her deathly face and trembling lips. "I must get Parson Rande to talk to her."

It was too late. Parson Rande (feeling rather uncomfortable, as if he had a pain in his conscience) talked to her; Aunt Elizabeth talked to her; father and mother talked to her. Margaret, amid her blinding tears of distress, confessed the truth—that she had embraced the other Faith. Her tender, pliable nature had been trained and turned and taught; and at length had entwined itself around the glittering imagery of the new Church, of the priest, and of the confessional.

And did it bring her peace? Ask the question of herself—as *they* did later—and hear her answer. In the depths of her jealous misery, caused by Clarence Davenport's faithlessness, she had sought for something that should bring her soul comfort. It was a something that did not exist in this world. Poor, mistaken, silly Margaret! She had thought this new Faith, that looked so attractive to the senses, would bring it: it was only when too late she found how bitterly she had deceived herself. It was after her profession of the Faith that she heard the news of Mr. Davenport's marriage: in the anguish of her spirit she confessed how impossible it was for any religion to do away with the blow. Protestant or Catholic—what mattered it? the anguish was there, and it could not be deadened. Her best relief would have been found in active life; and she had entered upon one that already seemed more like a living tomb.

"I did not know," she gasped, weeping upon Aunt Elizabeth's bosom. "I was young and very foolish; and I trusted blindly to all that was said to me. Oh forgive, forgive me! Ask my dear father and mother to forgive me. There are blighted lives in this world, and mine is one."



## THROUGH THE CHURCHYARD.

On her way home through the churchyard, where all the dead lie silent,  
 With her satchel in her hand, holding treasures of school lore,  
 Little Polly stays to gaze at the gorgeous autumn sunset ;  
 To drink in all its glory till her soul can hold no more.

Ah ! bright indeed is that dear heav'n, where all are good and happy ;  
 And yet—she shivers at the thought—she does not wish to die ;  
 To leave her parents and her home, to leave her books and playthings  
 This earth is also very sweet, and she can see the sky ;

Can catch down yonder in the west, between the purple cloud-bars,  
 A far glimpse of that glad city whose wealth may not be told ;  
 Whose twelve gates are of priceless pearl ; whose light is clear as  
 crystal,

Shining on wondrous splendours, upon countless gems and gold.

Yes, surely she can see them, the foundation stones of sapphire,  
 Of chrysolite and emerald ; for all those colours rare  
 Can only be the precious stones that sparkle in God's presence ;  
 No gayest tints she knows of here were ever half so fair.

She wishes they were not so far that she might see more plainly ;  
 She lingers in the churchyard till the richest hues have fled,  
 Climbing up the worn stone steps of the lofty old sundial  
 To catch the latest glimmer of the burning ball of red.

Her mother sometimes questions why she takes that way each evening—  
 Why she comes not by the road where the other children go :  
 Polly scarcely knows her reasons—only the high brick houses  
 Cast shadows on her footsteps, and shut out the western glow.

So she still goes through the churchyard ; still feasts her eyes and fancy  
 On the open sky, the flying clouds, the sunset's crimson beams ;  
 Still reads the quaint inscriptions on the ancient moss-grown tomb  
 stones ;

Still wonders at the solemn tow'r, and dreams her childish dreams.

Ah, Polly ! keep your vision clear, and find in earth your heaven ;  
 Draw all its beauty to your soul ; 'twill scarce be too much store  
 To last you through your woman's life of drudgery and dulness ;  
 To light up days of darkness when the heart is sick and sore.

And when beside a new-made grave your bitter tears are falling,  
 Glance over to the golden west, and ease your spirit's pain  
 By seeing, with the old child's faith, the city of the blessed,

Where, through the churchyard passage, you shall find the lost  
 again.

EMMA RHODES.

## PRESMER : A FRENCH STORY.

FROM the town of Prèsmer it is a good walk to the port and the shipping ; but when once you have reached the sea, you find that for boldness and grandeur of situation it possesses few rivals. From the end of the long pier there stretches around you an extent of water almost awe-stirring. At times it is calm and smooth as an inland lake : light clouds riding leisurely across the deep blue sky reflect themselves upon the still, smooth water : not a ripple disturbs the beauty of the glass-like surface, changing its colours from blue to green in all their shades, as if the mighty ocean were but as a kaleidoscope shaken in the hands of a child.

But there are times when the wind is abroad with its awful power for destruction. Then the sea rises mountains high, and dashes against the pier as if it would hurl away its foundations from their safe resting-place : and many a small craft, and many a one of more noble size, seems threatened with a speedy grave, as it bravely struggles onwards for the mouth of the harbour.

In one of the best houses of the principal street of Prèsmer—the Rue de l'Est—sat two ladies dressed in slight mourning. They were Madame de Balder and her daughter Louise. Nearly two years ago, Monsieur de Balder had died, leaving his wife and child with a fortune that in France is considered large. Consequently, the man successful in winning the hand of Mademoiselle de Balder could only be esteemed fortunate by the comparatively small world of Prèsmer.

Louise de Balder was, in fact, favoured above the every-day lot of mortals. The inheritor of riches ; the possessor of more than ordinary beauty ; a temperament naturally kind and sympathizing ; she had but one fault, the result of training. That fault was self-will, carried to an extreme that bordered on selfishness, if not hardness. An only child, she had been petted and indulged to a height that would have utterly ruined a nature less sound and healthy at heart : and even in her it had done much present harm.

Just before the death of her father, Louise had become engaged to a gentleman holding a good position in the town : a barrister, gifted with sufficient talent to aspire some day to an influential post under government. The match was in all respects one of affection. Henry de l'Ombre was a man any girl might have been pardonably anxious and glad to win. Tall, handsome, amiable, and witty, he was of distinguished presence amid the ordinarily little Frenchmen : not a mother in Prèsmer and its neighbourhood, saddled with a marriageable daughter, but had indulged dreams in regard to him. Louise de Balder had gained the prize.



In the beginning of their engagement, Louise had consented to an arrangement that she might have objected to with reason; an arrangement proposed by Monsieur de l'Ombre that his mother should share their future home. Combinations of this sort are so seldom satisfactory in their workings that Louise might justly and without unkindness have urged that they should begin life together and alone. But she consented at once, freely and even gladly: and it was not until time went on and they began to think of the wedding-day that she suddenly declared her determination of never living with her future mother-in-law.

For this strange change in her opinion she had no reason to put forward, either to herself or to others. She liked and even loved Madame de l'Ombre, and never doubted but that she could live happily with her. Her change of mind was due alone to her native obstinacy, which suddenly saw fit to assert itself. And the objection which she might most reasonably have put forward when first broached became now mere freak of temper and self-will.

It bore, too, other fruits, troublesome as disagreeable. Monsieur de l'Ombre, fully reckoning upon her consent, had had his house—a large and handsome one—altered and embellished in many respects: many of the rooms redecorated and refurnished, and a small boudoir for his wife, fitted up with every luxury she could desire. As long as Madame de l'Ombre lived she would not leave that house: it was hers more than her son's: and therefore, if Louise at this last moment persisted in her change of mind, either the marriage must be broken off, or a new home prepared. Nothing else but this disagreement was now delaying the wedding.

Louise herself little realized what she was doing, or how far her happiness was bound up in M. de l'Ombre. Since their engagement, her self-will, to which he could not be blind, had often caused him many a bitter moment: but never had it been asserted capriciously as now. Had he cared for her less, many a time it might have come to an end between them: but in spite of all he loved her passionately: and the hope was ever present of being able in time to subdue her, when under the influence of a more healthy discipline than that of her parents' home.

*L'homme propose.* A far heavier chastisement was in store for Louise de Balder. And later on, her most bitter reflection was that the misery she had brought upon herself and others had been of her own making.

The shadows of evening were creeping over *Prèsmer*. A few female figures were straggling into the large church of St. Eloi to attend vespers: some of them ladies with faces close-veiled; others, women of the humbler class, dressed in white caps and hooded cloaks reaching down to their ankles.

Madame de Balder laid aside some curiously fine embroidery, upon which she had been at work, glanced at a very handsome clock on the mantelpiece, and hastily rose from her low easy chair. The room was large and beautifully furnished; a few costly ornaments were scattered about; at one end stood an open piano, one of Gounod's earlier songs upon the slide.

"Louise," said Madame de Balder, in a voice remarkable for sweetness, "you will be late for vespers. Even now we ought to be in church. I had no idea of the hour."

"I am not going to-night, mamma," returned Louise. "I fancied, you, too, meant to remain at home."

"Remain at home!" returned the mother. "When have you known me do that, save in weather that will not admit of my getting out? Come, child; dress yourself quickly, and let us depart."

"Mamma," reiterated Louise: and but for a certain hastiness or peevishness of tone, her voice had inherited her mother's sweetness; "I have said that I am not going. To-night you must manage without me."

"Louise," returned Madame de Balder, "I insist upon your accompanying me. Why do you wish to stay away?"

Louise was bending over some plants in a stand, picking off a few leaves that were not quite fresh enough to please her.

"You insist, mamma?" she laughed. "Then I disobey. Henri is coming in this evening, and especially asked me to be at home. It is clear that I cannot be in two places at once."

Madame de Balder sighed. For a moment there flashed across her, not for the first time by many, a thought of the mistake she had made in yielding her own will to her child's in the days gone by. She knew that she was powerless to control her now.

"You ought not to set aside your church duties even for Henri," she replied, in a mild tone of rebuke. "Take care, Louise, that your self-will does not some day bring upon you a severe judgment."

She left the room, and in a few moments was hurrying through the streets, accompanied by one of her servants, Marie.

Louise flitted about after her mother had left: taking up the embroidery, and adding a few stitches to the delicate work; picking off a few more leaves from the plants; finally seating herself at the piano, and taking from the stand another of Gounod's songs, rattling off the prelude with a masterly touch. She was a finished musician. Then she commenced in a voice of rare quality, that light, sparkling air, so unlike most of his compositions—

"Dites, la jeune belle,  
Où voulez-vous aller ?  
La voile ouvre son aile,  
La brise va souffler."

She was singing the last verse when the door quietly opened, and a

man's head appeared. He was wonderfully handsome certainly. The eyes were laughing as well as the mouth: large dark brown eyes that rested upon the girl at the piano with a gaze of rapturous admiration and love. There was a perfect absence of anything like vanity or self-consciousness in the face; and a look of earnestness and steadiness of purpose replaced the expression of frivolity that for the most part characterized the young men of the town. He listened in patience to the last words:—

“Menez-moi, dit la belle,  
A la rive fidèle,  
Où l'on aime toujours.  
Cette rive, ma chère,  
On ne la connaît guère,  
Au pays des amours.”

Then before she could go back to the refrain: “Toujours Gounod!” he cried, without changing his position.

Louise started and turned round.

“Toujours perdrix!” She turned, laughing at the surprise, and flushing with pleasure. “There is no composer like Gounod.”

“I cannot say as much for the words of his songs, if this is a specimen of them,” said M. de l'Ombre, throwing himself beside Louise and clasping her round the waist. “Do you put faith in those you have just uttered?”

The conventionalities generally existing in France between two engaged persons; the distance and ceremony that so seldom approaches intimacy or gets nearer to freedom than a stiff bow, or perhaps, a polite, cold kiss of the hand, had been discarded in their case almost from the first. True affection, an element so often lacking in French engagements, had drawn them together in close bonds, that would have fretted impatiently had the restraint imposed by the ordinary usages of society been maintained.

“The writer of those lines must have been a barbarian,” observed Louise. “They cannot be true, Henri?”

“I hope not,” returned M. de l'Ombre. “But, Louise,” he added, his tone changing to grave earnestness, “I have to talk to you in a manner that perhaps will enable your own heart to answer you. I am about, once and for all, to put your love for me to the test. Where is your mother?”

“She is gone to vespers,” replied the young lady. “After that she intends to pay a visit to a sick friend. Marie is with her.”

Her face had clouded over with the change in his tone and words. She knew what was coming—another battle between her own will and his: perhaps a final one: and the will, she whispered to herself, which had been accustomed to conquer should gain the victory now. The expression of resolution and sternness that passed over her countenance marred it of much of its beauty. In a moment it had become almost as the face of another person.

"Now then—" she began.

"Stay," he interrupted. "We have the room and the time to ourselves, Louise, and I must carry out my purpose. I have made the resolve and will keep it. To-night, you and I must come to a final understanding. My darling, we cannot always remain at variance. From henceforth let us in all things be of one mind. I am not taking you by surprise: the subject has, unfortunately, been too often broached between us. Louise, will you not return once more to your old promise?"

It may be as well to state here why M. de l'Ombre had made so great a point of having his mother to live with them.

Within six months of his birth Henri de l'Ombre had lost his father. The blow to the young widow had well-nigh killed her, but the thought of her fatherless child enabled her to rally her energies. She determined to devote her whole future life to him, and from that hour had possessed but that one hope and object. Her constant care and companion had been Henri. As he grew older and repaid her love by becoming all that a mother could desire, her heart went out in gratitude for the consolation that had been vouchsafed to her.

The years went on, and Henri de l'Ombre grew to manhood, his mother's strength and support, her pride and happiness in life. He saw how necessary he was to her; and long before he thought of love or marriage, he had determined that as long as his mother lived, nothing should separate them. The thought and determination grew and strengthened with his years.

The first time that he ever met Louise de Balder was at a ball: that is to say, it was the first time that he ever took any special notice of her. They had now and then seen each other in ordinary life; and he had occasionally spoken a few sentences to her, and given no further consideration to her when out of sight. She had been a mere child. This was her first ball, and the girl seemed to have sprung up into womanhood. Henri thought he had never seen anything so beautiful as Louise, in the freshness and simplicity of her young delight; and he was not far wrong. When he returned home that night and walked noiselessly into his room, to avoid disturbing his mother, he felt that a new life had sprung up within him, for which he could not altogether account.

Through the whole of that night he tossed restlessly on his pillow, wondering what had come to him. Every now and then he would find himself living over again the scenes of the ball-room, and yet one figure alone occupied his imagination. Towards morning he fell into a fitful slumber, but only to dream of a slight girlish form robed in white, full of grace and beauty, and attracting all eyes towards her.

Not so very long after this they were betrothed, and for a time their life was passed in such a dream of happiness as few mortals enjoy.

But great as was Henri's love for Louise, it had not weakened his determination to live with his mother. Willingly, gladly, unhesitatingly, Louise had yielded to his wish in the matter, and his first great, real shock was the strange alteration of her mind at the last moment. From time to time he had argued the matter with her, but without result; and now, on the night in which our story opens, he had thoroughly settled to have the question once and for all set at rest. He wanted to be married: their engagement had already lasted too long to please him; and one or the other must now yield. If Louise still persisted in her capricious change of mind, she must give him up. She must choose between the two.

"You well know what I have to talk about, Louise," said M. de l'Ombre. "It will not, as I have said, take you by surprise. But you do not know the determination I have come to."

"Two are able to form a determination," replied Louise, her face growing yet sterner and more resolute. "Mine has been long taken."

"You mean that you will not return to your former consent to live with my mother?"

"Yes," she replied; "I do mean it. I have made up my mind that as long as you persist in forcing this arrangement upon me, Henri, you do not care for me as you ought. Your love for your mother must be greater than your love for me."

"Let me reason with you," said Henri de l'Ombre, infinitely pained by the foolish remark. "My love for my mother is one thing; my love for you another. You cannot draw a comparison between the two: it is wrong and childish to do so. I repeat it emphatically. If I loved my mother less, I should also love you less. Remember, she has had no one but me in the world—no other companion—for nearly thirty years. If I were to leave her I believe it would half be her death."

"You exaggerate the matter," answered Louise. "It is not as if you were going far away. You will be in the same town; able to see her often. It will be just the same thing as living together. Henri, I am giving up my mother for you: in turn you must do the same for me."

"The cases are quite different," said de l'Ombre. "Madame de Balder has always anticipated the moment when you would leave her. She tells us the day of your marriage will be one of the happiest of her existence: the hour that gives you a protector through life, and sets her anxieties on that point at rest for ever. Surely, Louise, if you love me, you will persist no longer in opposing my wishes."

It was will more than heart that was at fault. No one could object to Madame de l'Ombre. Her gentleness and amiability had passed into a proverb. She would yield up all authority and power to her son's wife, content to become a guest where she had reigned as mistress. Her nature was of that type which cares rather to follow



than to lead. Also the house was capacious, even for a good old French one.

Louise knew all this. It has already been said that she really loved Madame de l'Ombre: to live with her she regarded as no trial, no effort; the idea was not in itself unpalatable. But out of sheer self-will, she had made up her mind not to give way; and now in proportion as the matter was urged upon her, it seemed to grow into distaste.

"Surely," he reiterated, seeing her for a moment silent, "if you care for me as you assure me; as my own heart tells me you do; you will not persist in this caprice of temper—for I can call it nothing else. I am asking no painful sacrifice of you. Louise, you cannot refuse me?"

"I cannot consent," replied Louise, her voice firm and unwavering. "I have never had to give in to any one, and I cannot now. Henri—you compel me to say it—I will not."

How she afterwards repented her folly! when she awoke to a knowledge of her own heart: knew that her stubbornness had alone wrecked her happiness: that she had deliberately thrown it away of her own will.

For a few moments M. de l'Ombre buried his face in his hands. When he lifted it again it seemed as if he had passed through a time of agony.

"Louise," he said, his voice husky with pain, "you must choose between us. Either consent to my proposal or give me up."

She did not believe him, or perhaps she might have yielded: we will do her that justice. She thought he was merely attempting a last experiment, and that when it failed, her firmness would conquer. It had been so always with her parents: she could not realize that it might not be so now. Perhaps he would go away angry, to-night; but the morrow would bring him back to her. Better, after all, that she did not yield a reluctant consent: the human heart is so incomprehensible and capricious that their future would probably have been an unhappy one. So believing him not in earnest, she still held her ground.

"If you mean what you say," she replied, "I would rather give you up. I have never asked you for a single proof of your affection, such as you are exacting from me. Why should I not begin to doubt it? Put to the test, who knows that it would not be found wanting?"

"You don't know what you are saying," he cried, starting up, and he had made no truer remark that evening. "You are talking at random; like a child; without considering your words. What proof can you have of my love that I have not already given you?"

He was pacing the room, as if it could scarcely hold him, and the pain within him: Thoughts were passing rapidly through his mind.

He could not give her up ; he could not ; and yet in some way she must be brought to see her fault, and to yield up her will. All at once his resolution was taken. He came and stood over her.

"Louise," he said, "may heaven forgive you for the way in which you have played with me. May you never repent the words you have uttered. I will give you yet one more chance of reconsidering your determination. Business for a long time past has required my presence in a distant part of the country, but I have not had the courage to tear myself from you. I will now fulfil my engagement. Absence may enable you to see things in their right light : it will give you time for calm thought and reflection. But remember, that if on my return—whenever it may be—you still meet me in this spirit, from that moment all shall be at an end between us."

He bent and kissed her, even now tenderly, more of sorrow and pain than of anger in the caress. For one moment Louise felt her truer nature asserting itself : for one moment she was inclined to throw her arms round his neck, ask forgiveness, and yield herself wholly into his keeping. But pride and obstinacy again stepped in, and the chance was lost.

"He will come back to-morrow," thought Louise, as M. de l'Ombre left the room. "Then he will give way, and I shall conquer him, as I always have everybody else. I cannot believe that he was in earnest about going away."

Nevertheless she felt a little uncomfortable at the part she had played, and the manner in which it had been received.

Madame de Balder came in long after dusk, having found her sick friend worse than usual. The salon was in darkness. Louise had been too lost in thought to care for lights. Fancying it deserted, she was proceeding to her own room when Louise spoke.

"Is that you, mamma?"

Madame de Balder started.

"Why, Louise, are you sitting without a light? I thought Henri was coming in this evening."

"He has been here," replied Louise, shortly. "How is Malvina to-night?"

"Worse than usual, poor girl," answered Madame de Balder. "Her cough was frightful and her weakness increases. A very short time, and I fear it will be all over."

Involuntarily Louise drew a comparison between this sad fate and her own. She and the sick girl, though the latter was in a more humble station of life, had been schoolfellows together at the same convent. The two girls had been the favourites of the whole school, both with the sisters and the pupils. Both were beautiful ; but the beauty of Malvina Perrault was as the loveliness of those rare and delicate flowers which open in the morning with blushing sweetness and die at the set of sun.

Malvina's sun was about to go down, Louise's to rise to its full glory, unless she trifled away her happiness.

"Henri has been, and did not wait to see me!" said Madame de Balder. "How was that? Louise, there is something strange in your tone; something unusual in finding you here in the dark. I hope you have not had any disagreement with Henri! Remember, my daughter, what I have told you: should you ever lose de l'Ombre, you will never again meet with so desirable a parti."

Louise's reply to her mother's astonishment was to burst into tears.

"There is no chance of losing him," she said. "If I don't marry Henri de l'Ombre I will never marry any one else. But he came in to-night and began the old theme about our living with his mother, and I told him I could not and would not."

"And what did he say?"

"He said what he did not mean—that I must yield the point or give him up. I will do neither."

"You have acted wrongly," answered the mother, in as stern a tone as she could command. "You are playing with your own happiness, Louise. There can be no possible objection to your living with Madame de l'Ombre. She is the kindest and gentlest of women; and the establishment is perfect. For my own part, I would sooner have it so: and as Henri wishes it, your duty is to give way. My child, you have now a lesson to learn, which I and your father never enforced upon you—obedience; obedience to your husband. Unless you make up your mind to that, your married life will be full of unhappiness."

The next evening, about six o'clock, Louise was again seated in the salon, but this time the piano was closed, and the dead leaves were allowed to remain on the plants untouched. She had been ill at ease ever since the previous night, and could not shake off an undefined dread, as of some impending calamity. All day she had longed for Henri's appearance, and yet she had by no means made up her mind to yield to his wishes. It was now six o'clock, and every moment she hoped to hear his footstep in the corridor, and the clear ring of his voice. But the minutes went on, and he did not come. At last, just as the clock had struck seven, and the carrillon of the great tower had played its sweet melancholy air, Marie entered with a note.

Louise took it hastily and broke the seal, certain that it contained bad news of some sort. She needed not to look at the clear, bold handwriting, to tell her from whom it came. Her heart sank within her as she read its contents.

"Louise, my dearest," it began, "when we parted last night I told you that for a time it was farewell. How deeply I was pained by our interview you will never know. There are two reasons why I did not

at once and for ever break off our engagement: the one is that I cannot; I love you too faithfully to give you up, unless you force upon me an act that would blight my whole future life: the other is that I believe your caprice and self-will to be the result of education rather than the fault of your heart.

"Ma bien aimée, in spite of this I can give you but one more chance of deciding for or against me. I can no longer go on in the doubt and uncertainty that is fretting away my life. Upon my return your final answer must await me. I will come to you for it.

"Upon my return. I know not when that will be, for I am going to brave the perils of the deep. It is so long since I have had change and rest, that I have decided to go to Arronton by sea, instead of by land. I have been fortunate in meeting with a vessel starting this very day. Before this reaches you many miles will separate us from each other. By a strange coincidence the vessel bears your name—may it prove a happy omen!

"Adieu, my best beloved. My fervent prayers are for your happiness; my last words for your welfare.

"HENRI DE L'OMBRE."

Louise's first thought on reading this was that it was not true. The stupid fellow was playing with her. But she argued against her conviction; a moment's consideration told her that it was only too certain. Henri had indeed gone; left her in just sorrow and anger: and now, until his return, for her there would be neither peace nor happiness.

For the first time she saw her conduct in its true light; saw how wrong—almost wicked—she had been. From that moment she began to experience the first pangs of remorse: that worm which eats into the heart with more fatal effect than disease preys upon the body. She would have given worlds to bring him back again that she might throw herself at his feet, and give up for ever all her stubborn will into his keeping: but it was too late. She was too stunned to shed tears; she could scarcely think. Her first impulse was to throw herself down in despair; her second to rush off quickly to the end of the pier and strain her eyesight in the hope of catching a last glimpse of the "Louise;" her third to go round to Madame de l'Ombre, to ask her pardon for her wickedness, and to hear all the particulars of his departure. She did the latter. Hastily dressing herself, and calling Marie to attend her—the French custom, as the reader knows, allows no young unmarried lady to go out alone—she threaded the streets more like one dreaming than awake.

"Is anything the matter, mademoiselle?" asked Marie, as they went along. "Is Monsieur de l'Ombre malade? I understood Fifine that he had gone en voyage—out to sea. But that must be a mistake."

"It is quite true," replied Louise, her voice tremulous in spite of herself. "M. de l'Ombre has business to transact at Arronton, and for the sake of the air, has taken ship instead of going by land."

"Ciel, Mademoiselle! Est-cè qu'il est fou? He, who has never been for an hour upon the sea, will be dead of sea-sickness. And then the danger—he might be drowned."

"Be quiet, Marie," said Louise, half-shuddering, half-angry, at the picture suggested. "It is not a long or a dangerous voyage, and strong men don't die of sea-sickness."

Madame de l'Ombre was at supper when they reached her house; but Louise was admitted at all times. As she entered the room remorse seized her at sight of the solitary old lady, who had scarcely ever had occasion to sit down to table by herself. She had evidently been weeping; her face was troubled and pale, but it looked calm and tranquil now, under the bands of her grey hair.

Without a moment's thought, Louise threw herself into her arms and burst into tears.

"It is all my fault," she cried. "He would never have gone but for my folly and wickedness. I can never forgive myself; and you, madame, can never forgive me."

"How can it be your fault, Louise?" returned Madame de l'Ombre. "He had business to transact at Arronton, and he has taken the sea route for the sake of his health. For sometime now he has talked of going."

By which Louise knew that Henri, in his generosity, had not betrayed her to his mother, and her heart smote her with a double pang. She was a generous girl in spite of her obstinacy.

"Did he not tell you of our disagreement last night?" she asked.

"Yes," replied Madame de l'Ombre. "You see, *ma chère enfant*, it concerns me a little. He told me that you still objected to my living with you. I do not wonder at it, child. You have every right to object. I do not blame you, though I could wish your love for him to be so great that you would make even this sacrifice. I have entreated him to give up his wish—it is his and not mine; to allow me to have a separate home; but I cannot prevail. For once he is disobedient—as firm as a rock."

"Madame," said Louise, "I am ashamed of myself. I never really objected in my heart to your living with us: I believe I would rather have it than not: it was my wicked self-will that stood in the way. I see it now, though I did not at the time. When Henri comes back, I will give in to him in everything. I will never again oppose my will to his."

"I am rejoiced to hear it," cried Madame de l'Ombre. "Believe me, Louise, this is the only way of ensuring happiness in your wedded



life. You will never, I am sure, find Henri exercising his authority unnecessarily. He will be an indulgent husband. You will have your way in most things if you are only reasonable."

Louise went away a little consoled by the interview and by the confession of her wilfulness. In these first moments her repentance was real; but it is to be doubted whether it would have been lasting when once Henri was back again, gladdening her heart by his presence, and rendering her once more at ease by the sense of possession. The effect of a life-long training is not often easily undone.

And so the days went on.

Three weeks had elapsed since Henri had sailed, and the "Louise" was now due and expected into port again. The weather during the whole of this time had been bright and calm, but this morning there was a change. When it dawned, the sky was overcast with thick clouds that hurried rapidly across the heavens, chasing each other as if bent upon some mission of evil. There was wind somewhere. Was it out at sea?—and would the "Louise" encounter a gale?

"The sea must be rough to day," remarked Madame de Balder, seating herself at the breakfast table, and breaking her roll. "Louise, my child, you have put no sugar in my coffee."

"I have dropped it all into my own instead—a double quantity," laughed Louise, nervously. "I don't know where my thoughts could have been."

"With Henri, no doubt," returned her mother. "I was quite prepared for worse weather than this. The wind all night long has kept up that peculiar moaning and sighing in my chimney that I never hear but it ushers in a tempest. How those windows rattle!"

"I don't think we need wish it worse than this," said Louise, who during the past three weeks had certainly been growing somewhat pale and thin. "It may be nothing but a land wind, mother."

"True," replied Madame de Balder. "Perhaps the sea is not an angry one."

"Let us go down to the pier as soon as breakfast is over, and look out for ourselves."

"Willingly," replied Madame. "But if we are to go after breakfast, and you do not make a beginning, Louise, we shall never get there."

Louise took part of a roll. She could not swallow it. Her mind was too ill at ease; she had never closed her eyes all night, not even for ten minutes. Though Henri must have been on the sea several days, it was not until last night that a nameless fear had crept over her, for the safety of her lover. And now that she had awakened to a dull day and angry sky, her fears seemed to have taken a tangible shape. She managed to drink a cup of coffee; and then rolling up her napkin, passed it through its silver ring.

By ten o'clock they had started for the pier, a walk of some distance.

As they passed the great tower the carrillon rang out with a cheerful sound; and the wind, now rising higher, carried the sweet tones far away on its wings. The clouds were still rapidly chasing each other, but there was no sign of rain: the wind would keep that away. As they turned the corner opening on the port, a gust stronger than usual almost took them off their feet, and they had to cling to each other for support.

"Ca commence," said Madame. "Louise, we shall never manage to reach the end of the pier."

"Courage, mamma," replied Louise. "We have nothing to fear. It is those on the water who are in danger."

Madame de Balder sighed. "True," she said. "That there can be men found willing to brave its awful perils! Louise, let us go in to the sailors' chapel, and say a prayer for the safety of those at sea."

They turned down a by-street. At the end, on the left hand, stood the chapel: a small building, beautifully decorated and ornamented. From the roof were suspended exquisite models of small ships. Images of saints filled up niches and miniature chapels, glittering with gold and tinsel. Lights burned in different parts of the building, and the small lamp before the altar, which was never allowed to go out, reflected its pale glimmer. A few women knelt on chairs at their devotions: they had relatives at sea for whose welfare they were anxious. A couple of fishwomen were near the altar, one on each side, looking picturesque and even coquettish in their gala dress: the long gold ear-rings, the white caps, the red fichus crossed on the breast, and the blue petticoat reaching just below the calves, displaying the well-stockinged leg and trim feet to advantage. The women had dressed to come and make their prayers.

Madame de Balder and Louise knelt down side by side, and after a short, fervent supplication for the safety of him with whom their heart was filled, they again started on their way.

Up to the present time their fears had been those of nervousness and anxiety: sufficient foundation scarcely existed for their dread. True the weather looked angry and threatening, but this was no uncommon occurrence, and most vessels would live through it.

They turned on to the pier, of which they had almost solitary possession. Passing a douanier patrolling up and down, they presently came upon two more fishwomen *not* dressed, who were talking to some sailors on a small boat fastened to the side of the pier.

"I would rather be here than at sea," one of the men remarked, as they passed. "If we don't have a pretty stiff gale in a few hours' time, I am not called Jean Jacques."

It was as much as ever Louise and her mother could do to stand on their feet; as much as they could do to hold together. The wind took their skirts and flopped them about, as if trying to tear them into

shreads. Once Madame thought of turning back, but Louise persisted in struggling on to the very end. It was a long pier and reached far out; had it not been low water, the waves would have dashed over it to-day, and soaked them through and through.

They reached the end at last, breathless and exhausted with their battle. A few ships stood outside, waiting until the tide should be high enough to admit of their entering the port. Somewhat farther off than the rest, the English steamer from London was rocking about, pitching and tossing, having lost her tide; its passengers, if there were any, no doubt half dead with fright and sickness.

Whilst Madame de Balder and Louise were gazing upon the great dark waste of waters, stretching away as far as the eye could reach, looking cold and cruel and black as the sky above, the watchman came out of his small house, telescope in hand, with which he swept the horizon.

"Bonjour, mesdames," said he, touching his cap. "You have courage to brave the wind and the sea on such a day."

"It looks dreadful," returned Louise, with a shudder. "Is the worst of the weather past?"

"The worst, mademoiselle!" cried the man, with a short laugh. "Why this is nothing. This is only the beginning of what it is going to be. We have not had any really bad weather yet. The worst will not be before night."

"But what about the ships that are coming in?" demanded Madame de Balder. "How will they brave the fury of the elements?"

"Ah, madame," he answered, with a shrug of the shoulders, "they must take their chance. There is a providence overruling all, and sometimes it is the only thought left to us."

"Do you know anything of the 'Louise'?" asked Madame.

"The 'Louise' of Arronton, does madame refer to?"

"The same."

"Do I know my own name?" returned the man slowly, as he again swept the sea with his glass. "Ah! there, far away, comes the Rotterdam boat. Look, mademoiselle, through my telescope; you will observe how bravely she rides the waves. But she will have a dose of it outside for an hour or two. Pardon, Madame. You were speaking of the 'Louise'. I have reason to know her, since I have a nephew who is one of the sailors on board: a graceless vagabond, who did so much mischief on shore that at length we were compelled to send him to sea. The 'Louise' was a nice little vessel in her day; very nice; but she is getting old and creachy. I should not like to be in her in a rough storm. In fact, I am not quite easy on my nephew's account—vagabond though he is—and I have arranged to transfer him into a new ship that takes more distant voyages than the 'Louise,' and will give him longer spells of discipline."

The man's words were as the touch of a hot iron to Louise and her mother. Both gave an exclamation at his account, and Louise turned so pale that even the old sailor noticed it.

"Mademoiselle is ill," he said. "Have I frightened her with my account? Surely the ladies have no one on board the 'Louise' belonging to them?"

"We have a friend," replied Madame de Balder, as calmly as she could. "Monsieur de l'Ombre. You know him."

"Who in *Prèsmer* does not?" returned the man, smiling. "Ah, madame, there are not many like him. I have known him well from a child. One of my daughters lives with Madame de l'Ombre, as perhaps madame knows; and it was through my nephew going up there the very day she sailed that Monsieur Henri took a berth in the 'Louise'. But I did not know he was coming back in her. Indeed, I had forgot ten all about him."

"The 'Louise' is expected in to-day?" said Madame de Balder.

"This afternoon, about five o'clock, Madame. Of course there is no certainty with sailing vessels, but as far as I can tell, she has had fair winds. My impression is that she will come in this night."

The tide was flowing. The water was rising, and dashing against the wood-work with a force that caused it to shake and tremble. Already the waves were sprinkling the pier, and unless Madame de Balder and Louise hastened back, they would inevitably be drenched. It was clearly of no use staying there; indeed it had been little use coming at all. No consolation had been gained, but on the contrary much of dread. They had learned that the "Louise" was scarcely seaworthy, and that with such weather as the present their fears were anything but groundless.

The wind blew them along as they went down the pier, just as it had blown against them in coming; and every now and then they had to run to keep up with its strength. But for their anxiety they would have laughed and enjoyed it. Once the water did break over them slightly, and they dashed through it with as near a smile as their sad hearts would admit of.

The day dragged heavily on. About one o'clock the wind abated, and the clouds seemed less heavy; many thought fair weather was going to set in. But it was only a lull. At four o'clock it came on with double fierceness. Those who were down at the sea heard a more angry roar in the waves and saw a more threatening look in the sky.

Louise in her restless impatience wanted to go again to the end of the pier; but her mother would not consent. They had suffered enough in the morning: had come home exhausted and weary; almost too tired to stand. They could do no good by going, argued Madame. News either for good or for ill would reach them soon enough at home.

"Then, mamma, let Marie accompany me," pleaded Louise, who looked more like a ghost than her own self. "It cannot do us harm."

"It will do you much harm," replied Madame de Balder. "We could scarcely stand against the wind this morning. This afternoon it is much worse. Louise, you shall not go."

Had she always been as firm through life, how much better it would have been! For the present Louise seemed to have lost the power of resistance, and yielded to her mother.

The time went on. It grew dark. Ten o'clock came, and Louise and her mother separated for the night; whether to sleep was a doubtful question. The wind howled and roared round the house; the dark, thick, heavy clouds obscured every glimmer of light of the stars and the moon. It was a black night. The streets were deserted beyond here and there a solitary person compelled to be abroad on business. Yet no rain fell; not a drop had fallen during the whole day; with such a wind it was not likely to come down.

Louise threw herself on her bed without undressing, and she had whispered to Marie to do the same lest she should want her in the night. She did not attempt to sleep; did not even put out the light, for she dreaded the darkness. About two o'clock she got up and opened the window and looked out. The clouds were hurrying on wildly now, the few lamps in the street glimmered through the darkness, seeming but to render darkness more visible.

Suddenly, as she listened, she heard a sound that sent a thrill of terror through her. The man on the look-out at the top of the tower, whose business it was to blow a horn at stated intervals to assure the town of its safety, broke forth into a shout, not of safety, but a warning of danger. Louise caught the word and her heart stood still. "Au secours! au secours!"

"It is a ship in peril!" cried the distressed girl, without waiting to consider whether it was possible for the man to distinguish in the darkness anything so far off. In reality she was mistaken. What the watchman had seen was a fire in a different direction from the port, and it was to give notice of this that he was sending forth shouts through his speaking trumpet. But Louise, her whole mind filled with one idea, could imagine but one kind of danger. To remain quiet any longer was impossible. She closed her window and hastily put on a bonnet and thick cloak, and went to her mother's room. Gently opening the door and listening a moment, she could tell, by the soft, regular breathing, that she slept soundly. Worn out with the past day's anxiety, and perhaps lulled by the roaring wind, she had fallen into a deeper sleep than usual. Closing the door again, Louise went to her maid's room, and aroused her. The woman was not undressed.

"Qu'est-ce que c'est, Mademoiselle?" cried Marie, starting out of her sleep in fright. "Is Madame ill?"



"Put on your cloak and come with me," commanded Louise, speaking rapidly. "I cannot stay here any longer. There's a ship in distress, and I know it is the one Monsieur de l'Ombre is in."

Marie was now wide awake. When Mademoiselle commanded she had but to obey: and in a few moments they had noiselessly left the house.

The streets were deserted. No one as yet seemed to have heard the alarm cry. How grand the old tower looked in the darkness; how solemn the huge portico of the great church, as they passed beneath it! With what a nameless dread the blast of the horn boomed upon them: but the wind prevented their hearing the man's accompanying words distinctly, "*Au feu! au feu!*" They took it to be always "*Au secours,*" and hurried on as if their lives depended on reaching the pier. In spite of the waves that dashed over in a shower of spray, they bore onwards. Had it been fire instead of water, Louise would have braved it all the same.

At the end they found a small knot of people—a few women but mostly sailors, gazing out into the darkness. The man they had spoken to in the morning was there too, having changed his telescope for a night glass. Louise touched him on the arm.

"You, mademoiselle!" he exclaimed. "What brings you here at this time? It is not fit for you to be out in such weather."

"There is danger," replied Marie. "A ship in distress out at sea."

"How do you know that, Mademoiselle? Or do you only guess it?"

"I know it. I heard the man on the tower crying out '*au secours.*' I felt certain it was for a ship in danger."

"Ma pauvre demoiselle! The man on the tower could no more see a ship in danger on such a night as this than he could penetrate beyond those clouds to the light of the moon."

"Then is there no ship in distress?" cried Louise, breathlessly.

"There may be many," he answered. "But I know of two. You cannot see them, mademoiselle, even with the glass; your sight, unaccustomed to the darkness, would discern nothing but a waste of black, angry waters."

"What ships are they?" she demanded. "Can you tell?"

"Not positively. I have no doubt one of them is the '*Louise*;' she is due, you know."

Louise de Balder felt it was a moment for calmness, and the innate strength of her nature came to her aid.

"Can no help be given them?" she said.

"The lifeboat has been ready a long time, mademoiselle, but it cannot go out. Ah!" he exclaimed, looking through his glass, "she is driving before the wind. It seems to me that she has lost her rudder. If so, nothing but a miracle can save them."

It was a moment of intense anxiety: it lengthened into many more. To Louise such an hour probably would never come again. How she bore it with calmness and quietude she never afterwards knew. She could see nothing, strain her sight as she would. The waters and the sky seemed all one to her. She could not tell where the one ended and the other began. But no sign of a ship could she discern.

"What do you see now, Pierre?" said one of the women, who was also interested in the fate of the "Louise." "Is there any hope?"

"Hush!" said Pierre. "She is making for the rocks. It is as I said it must be; they have lost their rudder. But in such a sea and such a wind what helm would be of use?"

There was silence, and watching. Not a syllable was spoken. All waited for the words that fell from the watchman's lips. For a time he stood motionless: Then suddenly he dropped his glass with a cry of horror.

"She has struck! It is all over with her. She will go to pieces."

Still not a word from the small group. They were too awestricken to speak. Louise felt unnaturally calm. She could not realize the danger; its presence had stunned her faculties.

They waited on while in the distance a crew was drowning: waited until the man told them that where the ship had been he could now see nothing but water; and then some of them dispersed. The light-house, with its revolving lamp still pointed the way of safety to advancing mariners, but it could do no more. On such a night as this its very gleam seemed a mockery.

Louise turned, and taking Marie's arm, walked home as one in a dream. Once Marie tried a few words of consolation: the poor woman was terrified at this strange, silent calm: but Louise hushed her, and they walked on in silence.

Coming through the town they met a few stragglers returning from the fire, which had turned out to be nothing but a huge bonfire of burning rubbish: of which, according to custom, the people had neglected to give notice to the watchman.

They reached home at last. Louise went to her room, undressed mechanically and lay down, having dismissed Marie. But the next morning, when the woman entered her room at the usual hour, she found Louise in the first paroxysms of delirium and brain fever.

When that morning light came, it revealed a ship high and dry upon the sand. Two vessels had been in distress: and the one on the sands was not the "Louise." Later on towards evening a single body was washed ashore. The face had been battered against the rocks beyond recognition, but by a pocket-book in the coat, there could be no doubt that it was all that remained of Henri de l'Ombre.

*(To be concluded next month.)*

## CAUGHT IN A PRAIRIE STORM.

PRAIRIES! The very name can make me shiver. When covered with snow they are as trackless as is the ocean to an unskilled navigator. I would about as soon cross the Sahara without a guide as try to get over the snowy plains of the West and North-West. The real fright I once had in one of these tracks, sir, was bad enough to serve me for a life-time."

"Tell us about it, captain."

"Well, I don't mind. My uncle Dan and his family were staying at the D. Settlement; for he had taken the Western fever, and they went out there. Uncle Dan was always a speculator—though he did manage to line his pockets well. He purchased a vast tract of land at D. with an eye, it must have been, to some such promises as were held out to Abraham of old; for acres and acres of this land he could never personally utilize, though later he might sell it again to advantage. I was out, helping him. The family consisted of his wife, two grown-up daughters, and two young sons: and there was a niece, Cordelia. From the first moment I saw Cordelia Barwell, I thought a great deal of her. Perhaps that's why I stayed in the uncivilized place.

"Rolfé," said Uncle Dan one morning in the latter part of the winter, "it looks like a fine day, does it not?"

"Clear and bright, sir," I replied.

"Ay, likely to last. What say you then to taking Brown Bess and going to Bingley's Mills for me?"

"I will go with pleasure, Uncle Dan."

"The weather may break up any week now, Rolfé, and I must have the lumber ready to come down the river as far as the Forks with the freshets. There's a master lot to be got down next season, and we shall have a vast deal of teaming to bring it over here from the Forks. But, Rolfé, I know it will be a good speculation. By erecting a number of cheap substantial buildings on sections of my land, I can advertise and sell first rate."

"Well, sir, I am ready to go over to Bingley's Mills for you, and to make what arrangements you please about the timber."

"So. Hector, boy, go out and get the mare harnessed."

"Uncle Dan, may I go to Bingley's Mills too?" cried a pleading, pretty voice, as Hector leaped off on his errand.

I could hardly believe my ears. The voice was Cordelia's.

"The child must be crazy!" called out aunt. "Do you know the length of the journey, Delia?"

"It is a lovely day, aunt. It won't hurt me."

"Yes, it is a lovely day, mother, so clear and calm," cried one of the other girls—Myra, I think—with quite an eager tone. "And poor Delia never goes anywhere."

That was true; but still I felt astonished. Later, I knew that it was a kind of conspiracy. The girls all wanted to get some trustworthy person to the post-office at Bingley's Mills to post letters and get some that were lying there, not intended for papa and mamma to read.

"I really don't see why Delia should not go," said the unsuspecting, good-natured uncle. "You will be sure to take care of her, Rolfe."

"I'll try to, sir."

So in less than half an hour from the time it was first mentioned, I was gathering up the reins, and Brown Bess was tossing her head until the bells jingled merrily.

"It's royal travelling," called out Uncle Dan, as we started. "Don't be out too late, Rolfe, for it has been a severe snap of weather lately, and—"

The rest was lost in the crunching of the crusty snow, and the "ping, ping, ping" of the cup-shaped bells.

"This is an unexpected honour, Miss Cordelia," I began, as the sleigh went smoothly along.

"Susan and Almira voted me their minister plenipotentiary," she responded coldly.

I and Cordelia—who was no blood relation of mine—had had a falling out of recent date, which made it all the more surprising she should have cared to go with me that day. She was one of those high-spirited girls who never strike their colours.

It had happened one evening about a week before. My aunt had a gathering—for there were settlers enough in the vicinity to give us social evenings—and about a dozen people were present. You may fancy perhaps that we have no intelligent spirits in the prairies, but that is a mistake.

Cordelia and I had disputed about the relative characteristics of men and women. She claimed the sweet attributes of patience, purity, and constancy, claimed them entirely for her sex. I gave genius, persistency, and strength of character to mine. To vex her still further, I averred my opinion that women were a mass of sentimentality, impromptu shrieks, and vacillation.

I had gone too far. She took it seriously. With a flash of scorn from her brilliant eyes and a heightened colour, she arose, went to the other side of the room, and busied herself with some old ladies.

The storm had not blown over. Cordelia retained her anger. More hurt at it than I would confess, I would gladly have begged her pardon; but her manner repulsed all overtures of reconciliation. Once, when I had accidentally caught hold of her hand, she twisted her own away, and gave a scornful frown to mine.

Now you know just what our social atmosphere was, when fate, that winter morning, decided that we should start together on that long ride.

The bells danced merrily, the air was clear, the sky blue; all things were pleasant except Delia. Say what I would, she was ungracious and hardly answered me. I suppose she wanted me to understand she had not come with me for pleasure, but to get the letters. We had gone miles beyond the last settler's cabin that we should see until we came into the vicinity of Bingley's Mills, when she apparently thought better of her behaviour, and spoke of her own accord cheerfully.

"How natural it is for the greater part of people to attach themselves to home, let it be where it may!"

"True."

"Two years ago I could not have believed that I should follow my aunt's family west, and be content to live on the outermost bounds of civilization. I'm sure I wonder that you stay, Mr. Rolfe."

"Do you! How well Brown Bess goes to-day!"

"She always does. There's not her equal in Uncle Dan's stables."

We arrived at Bingley's Mills—the largest settlement thereabouts and the post town—a little after noon. Brown Bess had indeed tossed her nimble heels well. Appointing three hours for the mare to rest, I went about my business, leaving Cordelia to do hers at the post house, and to remain at the inn in the middle of the village.

Chatting with this one, chatting with that, and getting through Uncle Dan's commissions, the short winter day flew away like magic. Meanwhile the cloudless, icy-clear sky had become covered over with a grey thickness, that suggested the idea of another snow-storm and ought to have warned me to get done quicker. But it did not. When Brown Bess and the sleigh came round to the inn door, the sun, wading for hours through snow-clouds, had sunk in a bank of leaden blue, and could not be more than an hour high.

"A little risky," said the man, glancing at the cardinal points of the compass, and shaking his head slightly.

Cordelia, her glowing cheeks nearly as bright as her scarlet hood, came forward with an animated manner. As I drew the buffaloes around her, I thought how, a week or two ago, I should have esteemed the privilege of this close companionship invaluable. But I did not seem to appreciate it now. She had treated me too cavalierly and I had grown somewhat resentful.

We dashed away. The air was damp and cutting, and as we came upon the open prairie it stung our cheeks like needles. Half an hour after starting I said to her, "If the snow only keeps off, we shall get along nicely." Cordelia glanced up from her scarlet hood: she did not seem to think much about it one way or the other.

"Did you accomplish your postal commissions, Miss Cordelia?"



"Oh yes, thank you."

At the very moment a particle of icy snow fell on my glove. I would not believe but that the mare had flung the particles from her flying heels. But in a minute more a handful of fine particles sifted over us both. Cordelia gave me a half-startled glance. I spoke out cheerily to the mare, and tucked the blankets in around my companion. A half hour longer found the north-east wind steadily and perceptibly rising, while the icy flakes were tinkling on the crusty surface around our way. Quite soon there were small whirlwinds driving the dry, powdery stuff around and around, and then spinning it up in a little column. Darkness came down rapidly, but not before the wind had fearfully increased, and the atmosphere was white with tiny flakes that drifted by us in loose bulging folds.

Cordelia did not speak, she only tightened the fur scarf around her neck, and sat perfectly quiet. At that moment I would have given a fortune if the girl had been safe at my uncle's, and I breasting the storm alone. We came to a belt of woodland, just ten miles of our journey through; nearly twenty more before us. Heaven! it seemed like a voyage across the world. And a most awful fear was tugging at my heart.

A white gloom was let down all around us. On and on we went. I did not speak to the mare, nor whip her; there was no need. She was trotting like a race-horse, her tail streaming in over the dash-board of the sleigh.

Another hour passed. The light snow was mounting above the runners, and driving obliquely across our laps in blinding, smothering thickness. Still we were getting on well: I hoped were nearing home.

"Are you cold?" I asked, drawing Cordelia closer to me.

"Nothing to speak of," she cheerfully replied. But I felt a strong shudder shake her from head to foot.

Presently the sleigh pitched considerably, although I held a tight rein.

"Rolfé," she began, and I thought I again felt her frame tremble, though her voice was cool and steady, "the wind does not strike on us just as it did; neither did we pitch this morning as we are doing now. Have we lost the road?"

"By heaven, you have spoken my thoughts, Cordelia!" I ejaculated, while a damp, icy coldness broke out from every pore of my skin. She shuddered again, but said nothing.

I knotted the reins and dropped them over the dash-board. *This* was why the mare had held so hardly—she knew better than I. I must trust to her instinct. In twenty minutes she had swung around so as to bring the wind on the old quarter with us. It was blowing heavy. I put my arms around my companion to hold the blankets in place.

Just then a faint sound reached my startled ear. A swift shudder

shook me, and I came near crying aloud. Another melancholy cry. I would have drawn the blankets about Cordelia's head.

"I hear it," she softly whispered. And in my terror and agony I drew her closer in a covetous clasp.

The sound came again. The mare heard it also, I knew, for she gave a sudden leap, and then the jingling of the bells was changed to even strokes. She had broken from a hard trot into a gallop. My thoughts flew to the uttermost bounds of earth in a moment, and from earth to heaven. I prayed for the safety of my companion, more than for my own.

The short cry and the long wail. Wolves were calling each other to the banquet. The moments fled; the storm suddenly abated: but the deadly sounds grew each moment more distinct. The wind swept by us, and died away at the right; no snow was falling; but nearer and nearer came those fearful sounds. Every moment we were in danger of striking some obstacle, and of being hurled out.

We were actually flying over the ground. We could not be far from home; but in the universal whiteness there were no landmarks, and alas! alas! every yelp was now distinctly audible. The dreadful animals must soon leap upon us. I looked from side to side, expecting a gaunt form to spring against the sleigh. Brown Bess, true to herself and to us, bore on steadily and fleetly: *she* knew the way.

I tried to draw Cordelia down to the bottom of the sleigh, but she resisted.

"Don't, Rolfe. I would rather meet death with my eyes open," she said, pushing away the furs from her face.

The darkness was as intense as it can be in winter, and—Heaven have mercy! are they surrounding us? Hear the yelps ahead, the hungry cries! The air seemed rent with demoniac yells, snarls, and shrieking howls.

Remembering the short-handled axe in the bottom of the sleigh, I threw off my gloves, and seized it with a grip of desperation.

With my foot braced upon the iron of the sleigh outside, I half kneeled, axe in hand, expecting one of the dusky fiends to leap each instant upon us. The mare wavered a moment as the sounds grew fiercer, and then with a shrill neigh leaped on again. Somehow the wolves did not come nearer—and Brown Bess flew along as though she knew our lives were in her power. The awful sounds grew less distinct, and with a reverent "God be praised!" I strove to be calm.

"Cordelia, look! Cordelia, we are saved!" I shouted, breaking into something between a laugh and a cry. "O Cordelia, look!"

The foaming mare was dashing through a line of torches, and the settlers sent up a joyous shout, and the yelping dogs dashed about with a chorus of delight.

Brown Bess, good lady, would not pause; she thought the wolves

were after her still, and dashed on, reeking with foam, to her own stable. My weeping aunt and excited cousins bore Cordelia in, while I felt more thankful to God than I had ever before had cause to feel.

"But that terrible fighting of wolves close upon us—what did it mean?" I asked later, when before the blazing fire I in vain essayed to steady my shaking nerves. "And why did they not come on to the attack? was it a miracle?"

"It was one of my stags," explained Uncle Dan. "Anderson came in and said the late unusually cold weather had made the cowardly creatures bold and ravenous: and he and I heard them signalling the pack soon after sunset. We knew they might overtake you if you delayed your return until after dark; so we slew the stag and drove out with him as far as we deemed advisable, hoping that they might find and fight over it while you were dashing past. We grew wild with fright as time passed on, Rolfe; and, arming ourselves with torches, rushed to meet you."

His plan had succeeded in saving us—good old Uncle Dan! But I don't like the word *prairie* at all.

"What became of Cordelia, Captain?"

"Cordelia? Ah, I thought that I told you my aunt and cousins bore her into the house in their arms."

"No evasion. Did you humbly beg her pardon later, for vexing her in opposing her pet theories?"

"I did that, sir. I begged her pardon on my knees. I told her that she had proved, in herself, by her own bravery, every good thing which she had said of her sex."

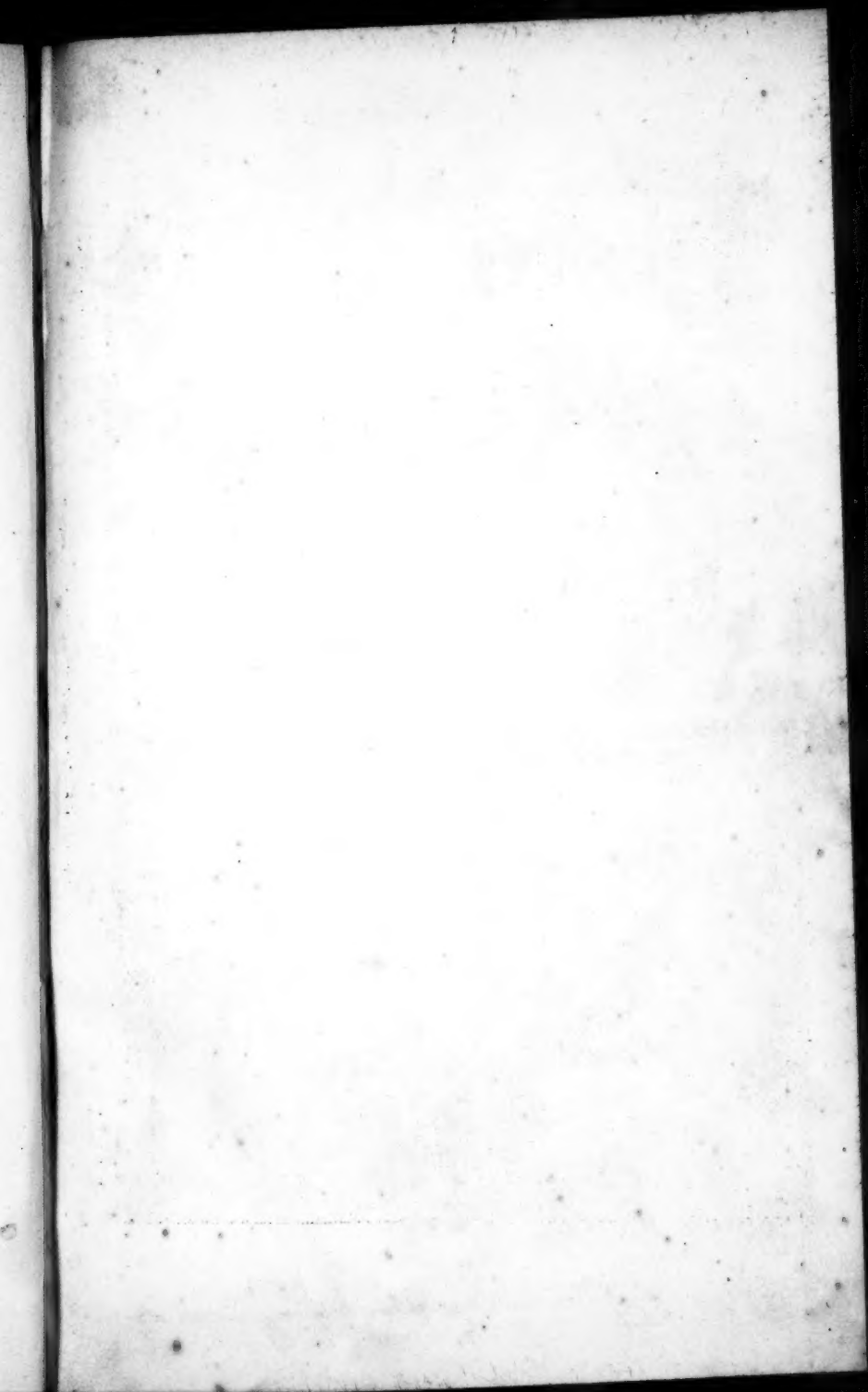
"Did she forgive you?"

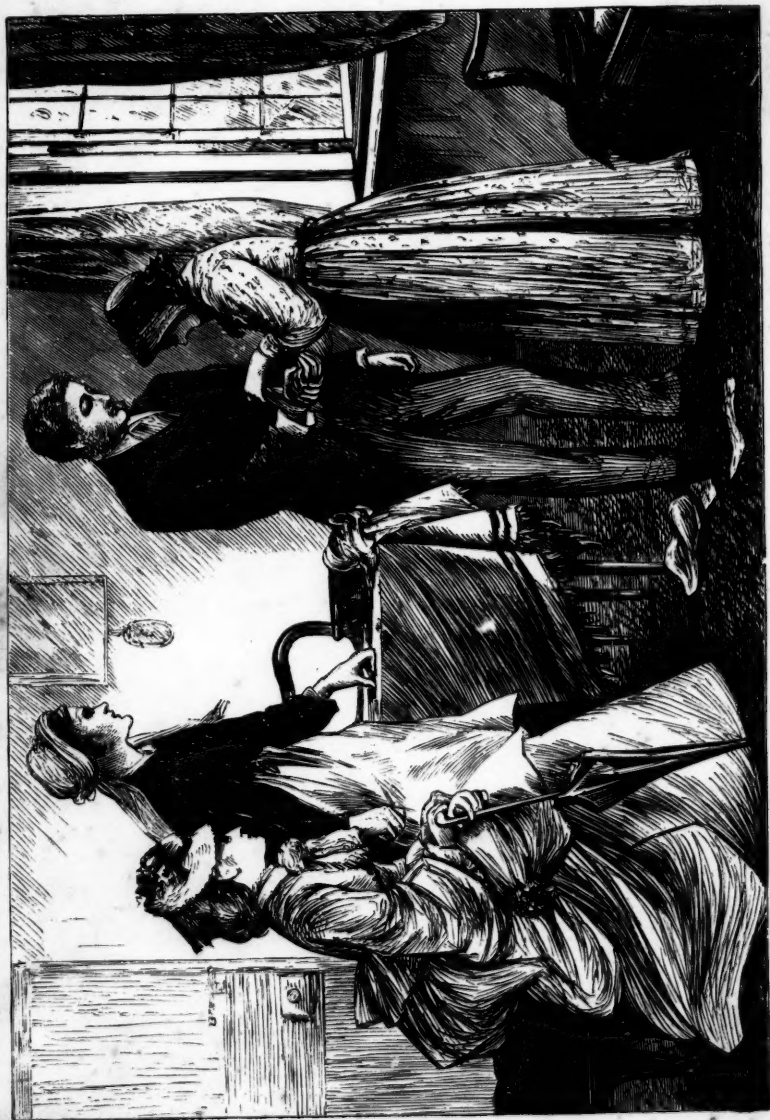
"Not exactly."

"She was right, Captain. She should have punished you severely."

"She did. Oh, she did. She—*married me*. Ow-w! ow-w! Cordelia, leave me my ears; leave me my ears!"







EDMUND EVANS.

"Not one of them interrupted Nurse Chasten's story."

M. ELLEN MURRAY.